POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY

A FOCUS MAGAZINES PUBLICATION

Dec 31 1987–Jan 6 1988 60p

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New virus shocker

THE Amiga Virus has found its way on to official software from a London dealer. The problem seems to be caused by shop demonstration machines being infected and the virus then passing to demonstration copies of the game.

Three out of 20 copies of the Electronic Arts Test Drive at GMB Electronics in London's Tottenham Court Road produced the familiar message "Something wonderful has happened. Your Amiga is alive".

A GMB spokesperson confirmed that the 17 virus-free copies had since been sold.

"People were desperate for it. We informed them that the games might have the virus and we sold the games only to people familiar to the Amiga who would know what to do if the virus appeared," a spokesperson said.

At first, Mark Lewis, European publisher of Electronic Arts was under the impression that the problem with the copies of Test Drive was caused by people trying to load the game prematurely. When told that the virus message had appeared, he denied that the virus was present at Electronic Arts.

"There is no way the copies could have come straight from the duplicator. There is no Amiga involved in the process," he said. It was his opinion that the games

Test Drive.

were not pristine copies.

The spokesperson for GMB Electronics was adamant. "The copies came direct via courier from Electronic Arts. So far as we are concerned, they are the genuine thing."

It is possible for Virus to get on to discs, since new discs are sent

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Gremlin's film action

Courtesy of Cannon Films.

MASTER Of The Universe is the first live-action film to have been created from a toy-line and, having acquired its exclusive licence, Gremlin recently released a computer game based on the film.

Gremlin boss, Ian Stewart, is 'absolutely confident' that the game will be a success, predominantly because Cannon had an almost unlimited budget in promoting the film. "It was one of the best organised launches concerning a film company," said Stewart.

No child could have escaped the Masters mania over Christmas and Gremlin were there riding on the back of all the hype.

Pizza Hut and the Daily Mirror were among those giving special offers on the Masters film and associated products.

Stewart's faith in the product was reflected by the fact that the game actually pre-empted the film's Boxing Day release by ten days. Normally, the game version would follow the film a few months later, in case the film flopped.

Many film-licensed games deviate from the actual storyline, merely using the main character. According to Stewart, the *Masters Of The Universe* computer game remains faithful to the motion picture.

Five key elements from the film have been chosen and Gremlin has made these into different parts of the game, providing considerable variation in gameplay.

In addition, some of the characters of the film are also incorpo-

continued on page 6 ▶

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EDITORIAL

Christmas is over for another year. As the nation prepares to turn its back on all those socks, book tokens and, yes, computers, we cannot help wondering what will be the big deal for Christmas 1988.

Think it through. There is clearly a gap opening in the now ageing games computer market. After six or seven years the market for games computers has crystallised with a number of groups – the youngsters playing games for the first time, dedicated users of a particular machine, and older users who started on a Spectrum and now use an Amiga or Atari.

In those circumstances the whole affair starts to look rather tired. All the machines on offer, brilliant though they are, are variations on a now elderly and rather limited format. It happens to be a format successful enough to pay many salaries, but the keyboard/joystick/monitor way of manipulating blobs of colour, on New Year's Eve, looks distinctly passé.

The vast sales of the Atari ST during the festive season have proved that it still has a strong attraction but are we really to believe that the combined brains of Atari, Commodore, Amstrad and the rest can provide nothing better? If that is the case, the market will surely stagnate in two years at best.

It is obvious that a radical injection of new life must and will be put into games computing. It must be for new people to be attracted to it as a leisure activity. We are often told that the market is "growing up", although this is more often cited as evidence of a shift towards 16-bit machines. As a self-fulfilling prophecy on the part of hardware manufacturers it sounds limiting.

Atari has already nailed its colours to the mast of the future with its soon-come CD-Rom machine. Obviously that kind of interactive video/computer game concept is the thing of the future, but whereas some see it happening in five years, there is every reason to suspect that the late 1980s will mark its arrival in a big way.

One company has its finger in several of these pies already. It has also proved its ability to bring new combinations of existing technologies to the market at an exceptionally low price. For Christmas 1988 look for the Amstrad interactive CD unit.

John Brissenden

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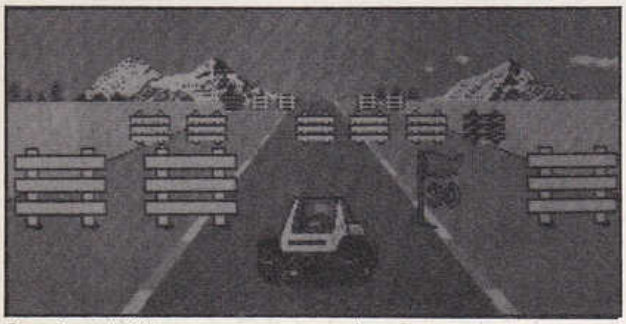
Elite makes 16-bit debut in '88



Buggy Boy on the ST.

ELITE has announced details about a range of software to be made available for the Atari ST and Amiga computers.

According to Geoff Grimes, Elite's marketing manager, "The earliest release of the games for the 16-bit machines is March, we hope to have the whole catalogue completed by about the middle of the year."

Titles to be made available will include *Space Harrier, Buggy Boy, Battleships* and also *Paper Boy*. The titles look likely to be released on the ST first and then the Amiga later.

Grimes said, "We're very much looking forward to bringing out 16-bit conversions. It opens up a whole new market."

Elite was very concerned about the pricing of the software. "It's very important that the industry doesn't out-price itself. We're looking at keeping the releases below £15," Grimes added.

But Geoff Heath, project manager of Mastertronic whose 16-bit products retail at £9.95 for budget and £19.95 for full price, said, "If the product is good enough it shouldn't go below £19.95."

Heath added that in order to justify a £19.95 release, the product had to be of a high enough standard for Mastertronic to release it.

Another company which has been in the forefront of 16-bit software is Electronic Arts. An Electronic Arts spokesperson said that because of the way Electronic Arts is positioned, there is no need to reduce the price of its 16-bit software. "We're aimed at the top end of the market and produce software of the highest quality which can take two or three years to develop, such as *Star Flight*."

Despite the fact the other software houses are dropping their prices, the spokesperson was adamant that Electronic Arts will keep their prices at £24.95.

"There is no plan to drop prices in the foreseeable future," she said.

Fleet Street gets slice of Atari's DTP package deal

LAST week Atari announced that it would be using Mirrorsoft's *Fleet Street Publisher* software as part of a new complete desktop publishing package.

Pat Bitton, marketing director of Mirrorsoft was delighted that Atari had decided to use its software, since Mirrorsoft had worked with Atari during the development of its *Fleet Street Publisher*.

"*Fleet Street* is an all-British product," she enthused, "using the technological expertise uniquely available to us as part of a major printing and publishing corporation. Both dealers and end users can rest assured that the product will be well supported by knowledgeable technical staff, and that Mirrorsoft as a company is well-positioned to meet future market requirements."

Les Player – Atari's European Technical Manager.

The system that dealers and distributors will receive comprises a Mega 2 or 4 ST, a monochrome monitor, 10 or 20 megabyte hard drive, SLM804 laser printer, *Fleet Street Publisher* 1.1. with SLM804 driver and the 1st Word word processor.

Atari's technical manager, Les Player, was also pleased with the deal, saying, "Atari has selected *Fleet Street Publisher* due to its flexible level of usage. Combined with the Atari Laser Printer and Mega ST, we now have a Desk Top Publishing package suitable for both the novice and experienced professional user."

However, since the system costs between £2000 and £3000, depending on the configuration of hardware, it is unlikely that many novices will be able to afford it.

Amstrad PPC to help out Prince

Prince Charles with Amstrad's Alan Sugar.

THE PRINCE of Wales recently received, on behalf of Business in the Community, a charity of which he is president, an Amstrad portable from Alan Sugar.

One of Prince Charles' inner city projects, BiC has been established for six years, its aim being to promote the involvement of companies in the community. BiC encourages different parts of the community to get together and co-operate on schemes such as job creation and training.

There are about 300 members, primarily from the private sector but also incorporating trade unions, voluntary organisations, local authorities and government departments. Through the BiC network of Enterprise Agencies, such bodies often sponsor people wanting to start their own businesses.

Based in London, BiC also has almost 300 small regional offices. It is hoped that the Amstrad donation will help to tighten the network of regional communication and, according to a BiC spokesperson, "Help us to help other people to put money into these projects."

In addition to the portable, Amstrad has also given a number of PC 1640 computers, an undisclosed cash grand and computer training facilities.

Stephen O'Brien, chief executive of BiC is very pleased with the Amstrad offer, saying: "We are delighted to have been given this equipment and most grateful to Amstrad for its generosity. This will be a great help to us in improving communication with our regional network."

PCW 9512 lifts at last

THE Amstrad 9512 Word Processor, which is the successor to the extremely successful 8256 Word Processor, does not appear to be doing as well as Amstrad expected. A leading computer dealer has said, "It's not as popular as everyone thinks."

The dealer put the unpopularity down to several reasons, "The end user has been disappointed with the printer, as it's noisy and not very good quality. We're selling more 8256 than 9512."

But leading Amstrad supplier Rymans said that the machine is starting to gain sales. A spokesperson said, "Sales are now picking up at last. One shop received three machines on a Friday and by Monday they were all sold. So far we haven't had any complaints from users."

WH Smith's at present do not stock the 9512, but a spokesperson said that they would consider stocking it in the near future since they have no reason not to.

An Amstrad spokesperson said: "It's a super machine and the printer quality is very good. We've had no real complaints."

Amstrad PCW 9512.

Sega success for Mastertronic

MASTERTRONIC is reporting that sales of its Sega Mastersystem have now exceeded over 30,000 units, with software sales approaching 100,000.

The success of the sales has meant that £5 million worth of stock has been sold.

Rachel Davies, Mastertronic marketing manager said: "We're very pleased with the way it has been selling even though we haven't done any major advertising for it."

Mastertronic has also announced details of a new range of cartridges and add-ons to be available for the Sega during 1988.

"We've got 12 new titles coming out over the next couple of months including *Zaxxon 3-D, Alien Syndrome* and *After Burner*," Davies said.

Davies was particularly enthusiastic about *After Burner*. "If you thought *Out Run* was big, *After Burner* is huge. It has to be seen."

The two add-ons Mastertronic are bringing out are 3-D glasses at £39.95 to enable the purchaser to play *Zaxxon 3-D* in real and Light Phaser at £44.95 so you can start to shoot up your television screen with some of the new range of games Mastertronic intend to release.

No final prices have been set on the cartridges as there is a fluctuation in the price of the Yen from Japan where Mastertronic imports the cartridges.

Tasword gets boost from Dutch banks

TASMAN Software has secured an agreement with two major Dutch banks to supply them with the Tasword word processing program.

The deal evolved through Tasman's licensee in Holland – Filosoft – who for the last four years has been translating and marketing Tasword and other products.

At an exhibition last year, Filosoft and Tasman were approached by Olivetti, who was in the process of negotiating a contract to supply large Dutch banks with computers and associated software. It was this meeting that eventually resulted in Tasman securing its major coup.

Simon Howarth, on behalf of Tasman, was very pleased with the new collaboration, saying: "It is a small market, largely ignored by the very big boys but one which is nice and contained for a company like ourselves."

Howarth refused to disclose the sums of money involved but since the banks have already bought and paid for about 12,000 Taswords, the amount is likely to be considerable. This money will be paid to Tasman on a royalty basis – a percentage of the total sales.

Howarth added that a further deal may be on the way since the banks were looking at the Tasman spelling checker, and a number of other products. It is thought that the banks may also take English versions of the checkers, to help them when writing letters in foreign languages.

Mega-Apocalypse gets January Spectrum debut

MARTECH will, in January, be releasing the much long awaited *Mega-Apocalypse* for the Spectrum.

Originally written by *Crazy Comets*' author Simon Nicol, the game was converted by John Wilson, with the graphics depicted by Malcolm Smith.

Hailed as the 'Arcade Game of the Year' *Mega-Apocalypse* features digitised speech samples and sound effects, 360 degree rotating pods and is described as a fast-action game.

Mega-Apocalypse will retail at £8.99 with a +3 version to follow at £14.99.

Also to follow are Amstrad versions priced at £9.99 and £14.

Hitachi CD cut

HITACHI has initiated price-cutting in the CD-ROM market, having reduced its CDR 2500 by 40 per cent, to £595.

Currently with sixty per cent of the world market share, Hitachi is set to keep this during 1988. Nick Rogers, marketing manager of Hitachi New Media Products, predicts that the New Year will bring further price cuts in CD-ROMs as other companies follow Hitachi's lead.

It is also offering a £145 discount off its new second generation (combined audio and data storage) drives when bundled with Microsoft's Bookshelf – for which Hitachi is the U.K. distributor.

Costing £195, the Bookshelf software is aimed at writers, researchers and teachers and contains ten of the most useful reference works to help them.

Special discounts are being offered to universities, colleges and schools in the government sponsored ECCTIS scheme under which details of some 50,000 courses and broadcast education programmes are on one 552 Mbyte compact disc.

Gremlin

◀ continued from page 1

rated in the game, so that the player does not get bored of just He-Man and Skeleton.

The *Masters Of The Universe* saga is set to continue all this year too, as Gremlin are working on a follow-up game to be released in April.

Entitled *Evil Hoards*, it is not another film tie-up but is once again based on the exploits of everyone's favourite cartoon hero, He-Man.

Adventure bugs

KENTILLER and *Rigel's Revenge*, two of Mastertronic's adventure games, have disruptive bugs, a source revealed to *Popular Computing Weekly* this week.

The source indicated that the Spectrum version of *Kentiller* has two fatal bugs which stops the player from completing the game. The first prevents Elva from killing the Darg Vool, and the second will not let the player retrieve a dagger from a chest.

The bug in *Rigel's Revenge* is also said to be fatal. Appearing in the second half of the adventure, it too prevents players from continuing their adventure.

Rigel's Revenge.

Rachel Davies, marketing manager for Mastertronic, admitted that a bug had been found on the Amstrad version of *Rigel's Revenge*. She denied, however, that there was any problem with *Kentiller*. "We are not aware of the bugs," she said.

Concerning *Rigel's Revenge*, Rachel continued. "The master that was used to duplicate the games has been redone." She added that Mastertronic was offering to replace any faulty tapes held by the public.

When questioned as to why no-one had spotted the bug before the game was released, a spokesperson commented: "Technically this happens a lot. Sometimes adventure games take days to complete and we have not got the time to play them ourselves."

The spokesperson stated that it was the programmer who found the bug but conceded that it should have been spotted before the game was released.

Ron Harris, Mastertronic's software manager, was adamant that the new batch of games would be bug free. "The samples have been tested all the way down," he said. "there are no bugs."

Accolade double from Electronic Arts

ELECTRONIC Arts has released details concerning the release of two new games from Accolade. The two titles are *The Train: Escape to Normandy* and *Power at Sea*.

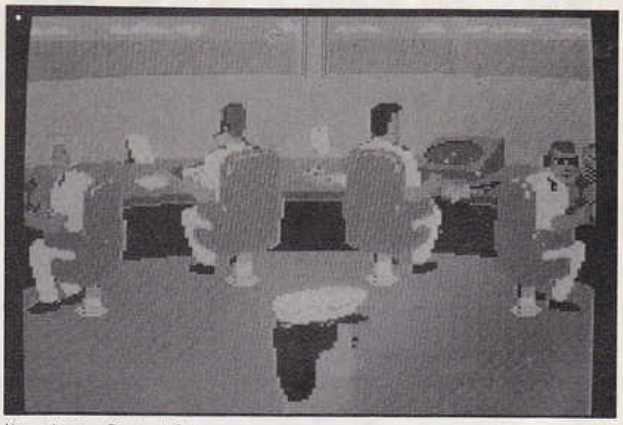
The Train is a strategic action game set in 1944 in Normandy. The plot concerns the Germans who are about to pull out of occupied France and take with them priceless French art treasures to Germany.

As a member of the French resistance you must stop them and take the train to the Allies in Normandy.

Power at Sea is also set during WW2.

This time you are at the helm of a U.S. convoy. You are about to take part in the Battle for Leyte Gulf against the Japanese.

The games are initially available for the Commodore 64 at £9.95 for cassette and £14.95 for the disc. Conversions for other machines are planned but release dates have yet to be finalised.



New release – Power at Sea.

CHARTS

Top Twenty

1	(4)	Out Run	Sega-US Gold
2	(1)	Combat School	Ocean
3	(2)	Grand Prix Simulator	Code Masters
4	(9)	Match Day 2	Ocean
5	(5)	Solid Gold	US Gold
6	(3)	Live Ammo	Ocean
7	(6)	Star Wars	Domark
8	(7)	Game Set Match	Ocean
9	(8)	Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer	Gremlin
10	(14)	Fruit Machine Simulator	Code Masters
11	(10)	10 Pack	Gremlin
12	(NE)	Rampage	Activision
13	(18)	BMX Simulator	Code Masters
14	(15)	Dizzy	Code Masters
15	(16)	Pro Ski Simulator	Code Masters
16	(24)	Back To The Future	Firebird
17	(11)	Soccer Boss	Alternative
18	(22)	Magnificent 7	Ocean
19	(17)	Renegade	Imagine
20	(13)	720	US Gold

All figures compiled by Gallup

Bros D at HMV

FANS of Code Masters budget computer games can finally meet their heroes the Darling brothers Richard and David live in person at an exclusive autograph signing session on January 7th at HMV records 363 Oxford Street, London from 5.30pm onwards.

The brothers D will be there to launch and sign copies of the new Code Masters Plus range of games.

The signing session at HMV is the first major appearance they have made in public but both brothers are looking forward to it. David Darling said: "Both Richard and I are looking forward to the HMV store appearance as it's a great opportunity for us to meet some of the people who have made Code Masters such an immediate success."

Meet the heroes.

New virus shocker

◀ continued from page 1

out with the write-protect tag open.

In that case, it is clear that any disc, not just *Test Drive*, could be affected if it has been previous used or demonstrated previously through no fault of either the manufacturer or the dealer.

If an infected disc is inserted into a demonstration machine, say *Workbench* or a customer's own game, it may be that virus could then reside in the demonstration machine.

In those circumstances it is easy to see how any game demonstrated on that machine could become infected.

The answer would appear to be to ensure that any game bought has not been demonstrated in a shop, although that presents problems of its own.

ST clock saves space

A NEW clock for the Atari ST has been launched which doesn't take up any space in the cartridge port of the ST. Produced by Star UK, it is available from Cotton House, 493 Union Street, Aberdeen, Scotland AB1 2DB. Tel: 0224 581858. Price £29.95.

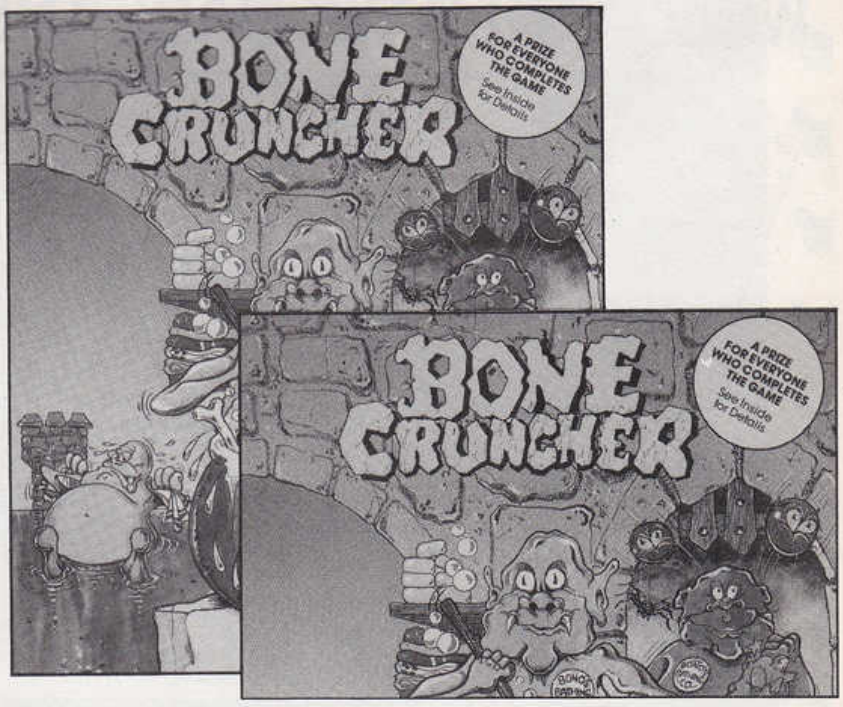
COMPETITION

Bonecruncher **is a brilliant and extremely exciting new fun game for the Commodore 64 and BBC B from Superior Software. At *Popular Computing Weekly*, we reckon this game is extremely addictive and worthy of a placing in your software library. So confident are we, that we are giving away 15 copies of *Bonecruncher* for the Commodore 64 and 15 copies for the BBC.**

All you have to do to win a copy of the game, please state machine you want it for, is answer the following two questions:

1. Which well known band does Bono front?

2. Which mega-successful sci-fi tv and film series has a character called Bones?



Address your postcard to: Bones Make The Wold Go Round Competition, Popular Computing Weekly, Focus Magazines, 3rd Floor, Greencoat House, Francis Street, London SW1P 1DG.

Entries must arrive by last post January 18th 1988.

Judges will be Francis Jago, Executive Editor and John Brissenden, Deputy Editor of *Popular Computing Weekly*.

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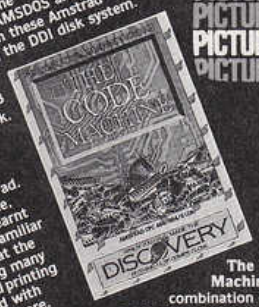
WHEN YOU HAVE MADE THE DISCOVERY

NOTHING ELSE COMES CLOSE

Pyradev is a set of 5 programs which collectively provide a secure and comfortable environment for the development of AMSDOS and CPM software on these Amstrad machines using the DDI disk system.

Amstrad CPC 464/664/6128 **£29.95** disk.



The Code Machine is a combination of the original picturesque Editor/Assembler and monitor. Both programs are entirely self contained and written entirely in machine code.

Amstrad CPC 464/664/6128 **£14.95** cassette

PLUS Spectrum **£12.95** cassette.

Pyraword the complete word processor for Amstrad. It is a single programme, simple enough to be learnt quickly by those not familiar with computers but at the same time producing many types of sophisticated printing normally associated with more expensive software.

Amstrad CPC 464/664/6128 **£14.95** cassette **£19.95** disk.

Emu is the electronic music utility which will remove a great deal of the hard work and mystery from programming the Amstrad Sound Chip. all your creations can be saved in a form that lets you use them in your own Basic or Machine Code program.

Amstrad CPC 464/664/ 6128 **£14.95** cassette **£19.95** disk.

The Animator gives you the chance to transform the ideas and images in your mind into pictures on your computer. The power of your computer is enormous, the creativity within your mind is greater still. The Animator allows the two to come together to open up a whole new computing world.

Amstrad CPC 464/664/6128 **£14.95** cassette **£17.95** disk.

WHEN YOU HAVE MADE THE

DISCOVERY

NOTHING ELSE COMES CLOSE

Please send me the following	No.	COST EACH	TOTAL
The Animator			
Pyraword			
Pyradev			
The Code Machine Amstrad			

	No.	COST EACH	TOTAL
The Code Machine Spectrum			
EMU			
Post & Packaging			FREE
TOTAL			

Name .....

Address .....

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Please charge my Access/Visa** the sum of .....

Card No..... Card Expiry Date.....

Please allow 28 days for delivery. *All cheques payable to Gremlin Graphics Software Limited. **Delete as necessary

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The good ship Nexus

Shortly before Christmas, another small software house called in the receiver. Nikki Carvey tells the sad tale of Nexus.

The recent and somewhat unexpected downfall of Nexus has resulted in considerable speculation about the factors contributing to its demise. Whatever the causes, small businesses inside and outside the computer industry will have learned from their costly mistakes.

Paul Voysey, who took over the directorship of Nexus in August, explained that the Nexus ship sank because of "historic indebtedness".

He expanded by saying that prior to Electronic Arts, Nexus had licensing deals with a number of countries. Far from being lucrative deals, Nexus signed with Electronic Arts owing considerable sums of money.

"In Australia, we had licensed eight products in three formats and taken £18,000 in advance," Voysey said. "Since sales were very disappointing we still had something in excess of £10,000 outstanding on products in that country. Effectively we would have had to ship another 10,000 games to break even or to have settled the debt there."

With the same situation occurring in several European countries the total sum owed amounted to thousands of pounds. Voysey believes that the problems centred predominantly on the failure to plan long-term. The situation was exacerbated by the neglect to make a bad debt provision. Subsequently, when companies failed owing Nexus money, Nexus lost financially.

So far as planning goes, it seems Nexus was almost doomed from the beginning. While Clive Bailey and Bill Delaney had sufficient capital to get them going in May, 1986, that money should have been invested in products but it was not.

Voysey was critical about the beginning, saying: "Someone said to me that small companies should always be run on the basis that they are in a crisis. Early on that was not the case with Nexus. Not enough money was going on products – it was going on small things here and there."

Nexus became affiliated to Electronic Arts in July 1987 and it was soon after that Delaney left, followed by Ian Ellery, to start another business totally removed from the computer industry.

In August, Voysey took control of the directorship and it soon became apparent that Nexus was in dire straits. "I had some idea of the deals which were going on," he said, "but it was only when I took over and looked carefully at the assets and liabilities that I found what the situation was. Things I thought had been sorted out and paid off appeared as very large debts."

The end of software products from Nexus.

John Forrest, director of European distribution for Electronic Arts, admitted that he "went in blind" as far as Nexus was concerned. Prior to negotiating deals in the U.K., Electronic Arts claimed to have researched the market thoroughly.

He defended Electronic Arts' naivity saying: "None of it was visible to us. There was no reason for us to have investigated Nexus deeply. We were not buying the company, so we took the assurance of people who had a place in the industry and a proven record."

It soon transpired that the company Forrest had believed to be very strong was too weak to cope. Electronic Arts had secured large orders in Europe for *Skull Diggery* but the buyers wanted the inlay cover re-designed. "We had discussed the new design with Nexus," said Forrest, "but they were not able to progress from the design stage to producing the covers for both legal and financial reasons."

Nexus had been over-spending dramatically. Voysey described the overheads as "crippling". The company was spending as if it was producing considerable numbers of games but in the time it was with Electronic Arts only two titles reached fruition.

Electronic Arts remained ignorant of the situation at Nexus until it was told by Voysey. It did not take long for it to throw in the towel but Forrest denied that Nexus was left in the lurch. "We would have baled it out but the figures we saw showed that it had got deeper and deeper into an uncontrollable situation."

Voysey supported Forrest's assertion saying that the Nexus affiliation to Electronic Arts probably prolonged the company's life. He praised its attempts to put together a rescue package. "At one stage we were trying to re-negotiate the whole basis of the contract to produce the software we had," he said.

From then the situation went into rapid decline. Voysey described the predicament. "It was horrific. We just could not get the figure down to anything accessible."

When it became obvious the situation was hopeless, Voysey informed the programmers soon before the liquidators moved in. The secretary, however, was oblivious to the fact until the liquidators arrived and began taking products.

For the moment, the future of the games Nexus had in the pipeline hang in the balance. Voysey admitted, though, that a number of companies had showed interest in bidding for the products, including Electronic Arts. The decision on who will get the games rests with the liquidators and no doubt there will be considerable haggling at the creditors' meeting next week.

Despite its embarrassment at the failure of Nexus, Electronic Arts has not been deterred from accumulating affiliated labels, as the recent Martech signing proved. Forrest is adamant that the company's concept is correct and that Nexus was merely not as strong as Electronic Arts had believed it to be.

Voysey, meanwhile, has time to reflect the past and what went wrong. He has learned a major lesson from the demise of Nexus and admits if he had the time over again, things would be done very differently. "I would run the operation much slimmer, put more money into product and have more products going through." □

Christmas cheer

I've just bought the Christmas double issue, and had to write in to say – well done! At last you've got *Popular* printed on decent paper. I noticed your Mastertronic competition as well – let's have more competitions in 1988.

A couple of grumbles about your Christmas Buyer's Guide. David Lester says that the Atari 520STM needs an adaptor to connect to a TV set. Wrong David – the M stands for modulator, which connects it to a TV set!

Also the Amiga does not, contrary to what David writes, have a built-in IBM emulator – although the A2000 has sockets for an IBM board, available as a £400 extra. Otherwise, great magazine, keep up the good work.

Cathy Robins,
London N16.

Yes there will be more competitions in 1988, and rest assured that David Lester's errors were spotted, and he has been locked in the cellar at Focus Towers over the entire Christmas holiday.

Good, bad, indifferent, or . . . ?

The back page article by Raymond Jones (Comment, November 26) on being ignored by software firms produced a wry smile in this office.

Is it not ironic that PCW chooses to "cast stones" at software firms when its own attitude towards serious business offers (with suggestions for a new puzzle) is much the same?

While PCW's questionably polite silence doubtless saves the editorial staff some time and trouble in the short run, in the long run it does nothing for PCW's reputation.

Whether you regard this policy of dismissive silence as "good, bad or indifferent" I do not know, but I *do* know how it looks from here!

Philip Lewis,
Model Micropastimes,
Bournemouth, Dorset.

The comment page is a platform for the personal opinions of individuals regarding any aspect of computing.

The opinions expressed there are not necessarily those of the editor or staff, and publication does not imply our agreement or otherwise with those views. So *Popular Computing Weekly* was in no way casting stones at anybody, nor agreeing or disagreeing with Mr Jones' views.

As far as our "silence" on puzzle ideas is concerned, we would like to thank all those readers who sent in ideas. The demand for the original puzzle's return has been well documented on our letters page. Obviously the return of the original puzzle means, unfortunately, that we were unable to use any of the other ideas submitted.

We cannot and do not reply to all letters, but would like to apologise to anybody who submitted an idea and was waiting for a personal reply.

Adventure society

In reply to "Comment" by Mike Lewis in PCW December 10.

Mike said "a few years ago adventure games were a growth area . . . today this is not so". The fact is a few years ago all computer games were a growth area and that growth has now considerably slowed. Although budget software has made a major impact on the mainstream market, there are relatively few adventures available at the lower price point. Sales of adventure games have therefore remained largely unaffected by market factors and are now taking early advantage of the growth in the 16 bit sector.

Another of Mike's statements was "adventure games no longer sell anywhere near the numbers of any moderate arcade game". But they do. They sell over a longer period. It's a different market. The Pawn was launched in March 1986 and still sells up to 5000 copies per month! It's a similar story with many other titles. No "moderate" arcade game can even come close in terms of overall sales performance.

Standards of programming? The Guild of Thieves recently won the British Micro Awards "Game of The Year Award" for its depth of plot, graphic content and technical excellence, beating worldwide competition. Magnetic Scrolls, Level 9 and Infocom all produce traditional adventures featuring gradual improvements over previous products. Level 9's latest release "Gnome Ranger" has ten times more text than their early products and the technical content is enormously more sophisticated. The mixture of plot, text, humour and intelligent response give each game an individual personality, a life, a vision, an imagination. Their appeal contrasts greatly with the nervy speed and excitement of arcade games. Adventures take more time to write than most arcade games. The games are no less enjoyable to play, they simply appeal to a different public.

Rather than needing to adapt, as Mike suggests, adventures need to continue their progression. The subject matter will become more diverse, the features will grow, the occasional leap forward will be made. It's all in hand Mike, people are already working hard towards these ends.

Where to get the information? Send a stamped addressed envelope to "P", Official Secrets, PO Box 847, Harlow, Essex CM21 9PH. We are about to build the World's best Adventure Society, to keep pace with the changes!

Tony Rainbird,
Inter-Mediates Ltd,
on behalf of
Magnetic Scrolls Ltd.

Interviews

Having read *Popular Computing Weekly* for several years, I have noticed that one very important feature is missing from the magazine — interviews. Where are they? The kind of interviews of which I am talking are with programmers, software houses, even famous people who use computers or play games on them.

I like the idea of a weekly News Analysis but how about having a weekly interview as well? Apart from this minor problem, I must say that the new format and the expanded games section have made *Popular Computing Weekly* a very enjoyable read.

Janet Williams,
Barnes, London.

Soft soaping

What is happening with the full-price software houses these days? Barely a week passes without a new compilation appearing featuring several games I bought only a month or so earlier. It is now approaching to the stage where I will not be buying any more full-price software, I will wait for the compilation and buy budget.

Sarah Powell,
Aberdeen, Scotland.

Infected

Not a week passes when your magazine does not have a story concerning virus on computers. Why is *Popular Computing Weekly* so obsessed with the virus?

David Jones,
Northolt, Middlesex.

Correction

Steve Gold's article on multi-user bulletin boards – Communications, December 10–16 – compared the cost of a number of multi-user games and said that compared to *The Gods and Mud*, *Phantasia* represents excellent value at £1 an hour.

Those behind The Gods have asked us to point out that The Gods costs only 50 pence an hour. We apologise for the error and for any embarrassment.

We are sorry but *Popular Computing Weekly* cannot guarantee to reply to *all* letters requesting a personal answer. It helps us enormously if readers are prepared to have general queries answered on these pages, so, if possible, please do not send SAEs.

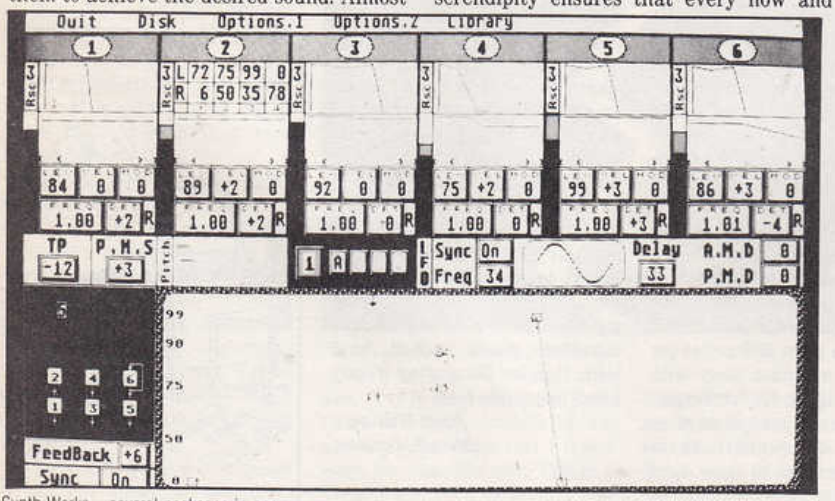
Mountains of sound

Tony Sachs takes a look at the Synth Works package for the Yamaha DX7 synthesisers.

The Yamaha DX7 synthesiser has had a remarkably long innings in a market where lifespans rarely exceed a year. In the four years since the DX7 was unleashed, more than 100,000 have been sold and its distinctive frequency modulation sounds can be heard on almost every chart record.

The quality of the FM sounds is such that the DX7 – and its offsprings, the TX7, TF1 and TX 216/816 synthesiser modules – have succeeded despite being fiendishly difficult to program. More than 100 parameters, known collectively as a patch, have to be specified to define a sound. Many DX7 owners find the process so daunting that they never venture beyond the original sounds supplied with the synthesiser.

Synth Works is several packages in one. At its most basic level it is a patch editor, displaying all the DX/TX parameters on a single screen where the user can tweak them to achieve the desired sound. Almost every adjustment can be made with the mouse, sometimes using clever two-button short-cuts. For many parameters the user can choose between altering a numeric value or varying the shape of a graph using the mouse to drag it to the correct shape.



Synth Works – several packages in one.

A great deal of thought obviously has gone into designing the patch editor. Some of the graphs have non-linear scales to represent the uneven effects of varying certain parameters. Another example is that two interacting variables, velocity and output level are combined cleverly in a single representation.

Two particularly useful aids are the four buffer areas, in which variations on a patch can be stored without losing the original, and a mini-sequencer which remembers a five-second snatch of music. It can be triggered from the ST QWERTY keyboard, allowing the user to hear a newly-edited patch in action without touching the synthesiser keyboard.

Although the editing screen makes the patch-designing process as painless as possible, Synth Works has some more tricks up its sleeve to assist in creating new sounds. If you want a variation on an existing patch, the program can compute versions of the patch by varying its parameters slightly. It can also create completely new sounds from scratch using a set of randomising algorithms developed by Steinberg. Although not all the sounds produced in this way are worth keeping, serendipity ensures that every now and then a gem emerges.

The two most powerful sound creation options offered by Synth Works are called mix and patch creation. The former produces an amalgam of between two and 32 patches selected by the user. You can mix a piano sound with a string sound to produce a new sound with elements of both. The program will produce a string of alternative combinations of the original sounds, never repeating itself, Steinberg claims.

Patch creation is a similar function which limits the number of source sounds to six but introduces artificial intelligence to analyse them and to form new patches from them. It is certainly a powerful tool although the Steinberg assertion that it will "swamp the music world with a plethora of new sounds" is probably an over-statement.

The next element of the Synth Works package is a patch library which can store more than 2,000 patches in 21 categories. To start you, the package has more than 700 patches, some of them familiar to DX/TX owners, many of them new. FM strong points are well represented with more than 100 examples each of piano and string sounds and almost 100 percussion patches. Patches can be moved around and sorted with ease and the program can even root out identical patches masquerading under different names.

The final weapon in the Synth Works armoury is a routine which performs a fast Fourier transform on any patch to display it as a three-dimensional graph. The result looks like a miniature mountain range and depicts how the various harmonic constitutents of the sound vary with time. Discordant sounds produce the most dramatic effects, generating a passable imitation of the Himalayas on the ST screen.

Although the FFT display is intriguing and educational, it is of little practical help in designing or editing patches. I suspect that it has been included to keep pace with Steinberg's main German rival, C-Lab, which has a similar function in its *X-Alyser* package. It will also provide an impressive showroom demonstration especially as, by pressing the F10 button, the display cycles through a series of views of the harmonic "mountain range" from different angles.

At £150, the Synth Works DX/TX offers remarkably good value for the library alone. ROM-based libraries of patches can cost more for fewer sounds. Add to this the ease of creating usable new sounds with the package and it is obvious that Steinberg has a winner. □

Evenlode Soundworks, The Studio, Church Street, Stonesfield, Oxford OX7 2PS. Tel: 099 389 228.

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All the luck in the world

Magnetic Scrolls again. Wacky plot again. Fabby graphics again. Loads of awards again? Some people have all the luck? I guess they do.

Jinxter is all about luck, and the lack of it. The magician Turani created a bracelet, complete with accompanying charms, to provide copious quantities of good luck for the inhabitants of Aquitania.

Here's where it all starts to get just a bit silly. The power of the bracelet, in the grasp of a worthy enough mortal, is harmful to witches, particularly the Green Witches of Aquitania.

So, the bracelet was placed in the hands of the witches to safeguard it, a move about as sensible as getting a wolf to watch over your sheep.

The power of the bracelet has limited the mischief that the witches could get up to, but now that has all changed.

A witch by the name of Jannedor has used her influence to overthrow the power of the bracelet, and cast an enchantment on it.

The net result, destruction of the bracelet, but only if all the charms are removed from it first.

Inducements have been offered to the public, to do this for the witches and now all the luck has run out in Aquitania for the ordinary working folk.

The powers of the bracelet are fast diminishing so a brave, forthright, upstanding, but most of all gullible, member of the public has been conscripted to find the charms, reassemble the bracelet, and confront the witches.

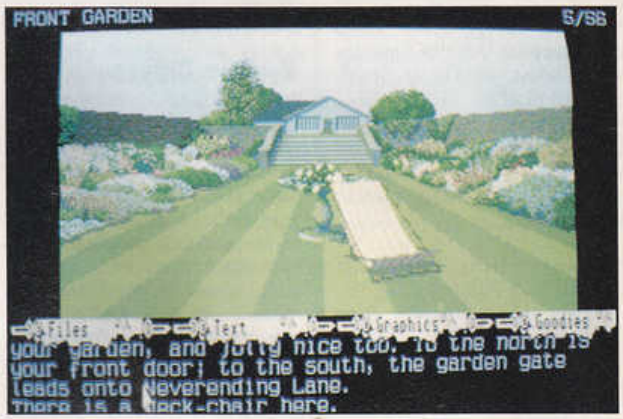
You in other words.

That's the task, the first problem is getting off a bus at the right stop.

It is important to get off at the right stop, otherwise you'll find yourself halfway down Neverending Lane. And it's quite long!

Getting off the bus accomplished, a first meeting with an immortal and a mysterious juggernaut is on the cards, but only if you stoop to pick up some keys.

Inside your house the telephone rings, and you hear the last words of one of your friends. Head for his house, by going out of your back door and the adventure begins in earnest.



The graphics are as good as usual, except for the opening scene. This looks like people decomposing on a bus.

It's ghastly, and completely different in style than everything else in the game.

The packaging is nearly as copious as usual. An envelope containing a memo, instruction card, a competition beermat, and a copy of The Independent Guardian, quality news for the hard of thinking make up the goodies. Missing is a novella, but considering what they tend to be like this is no loss.

The newspaper will raise a few chuckles, but isn't as good as What Burglar? in *Guild of Thieves.*

Problems in *Jinxter* include getting past a bull, barbed wire fence, seeing in the dark, opening Xam's mailbox (your recently departed friend's), dealing with a megalomaniac gardener, a postmistress who thinks she is Calamity Jane, and most bitingly of all, Poor Bloody Lebling (ho, bloody, ho), the dim witted postman.

The parser in *Jinxter* is reputedly more advanced than in *The Pawn,* and *Guild of Thieves,* but it doesn't seem so.

What you may not be able to swallow is the sophisticated humour and the satirical element.

If expressions like 'Narmean' and 'Wossname' are your idea of stylish wit, then you're going to love *Jinxter.*

A more frivolous game than *Guild of Thieves, Jinxter* represents a different style again, while still retaining all the acclaimed Scrolls hallmarks.

As far as adventure games go, there seems to be few companies that can match the Rainbird/Magnetic Scrolls alliance.

Even the mighty Infocom are being eclipsed with their diehard text only productions, so it only remains to be seen exactly how much acclaim is poured onto *Jinxter.*

Good as this adventure is, though, I seriously doubt that it will be the best one that Anita Sinclair and Co. come up with in 1988.

Reviewer Duncan Evans
Rating 16
Micro Amiga/ST
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Your complete guide to all the software released this week

Amstrad CPC

Program *Compendium* **Price** £9.99 **Supplier** Gremlin Graphics, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS.
Shove-a-Sledge, Tiddly Winks, Ludo and *Snakes and Ladders* make up this compendium, unashamedly aimed at the younger gamer.

Program *Anarchy* **Price** £2.99 **Supplier** Rack-It/Hewson, 56b Milton Park, Milton, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RX.
Sixteen maze-like carpets of blastable blocks, unstoppable aliens, tricky trackers and manic manoeuvring combine to form the thinking man's shoot-'em up.

According to the press release anyway. Actually it's a reasonable enough game.

Atari ST

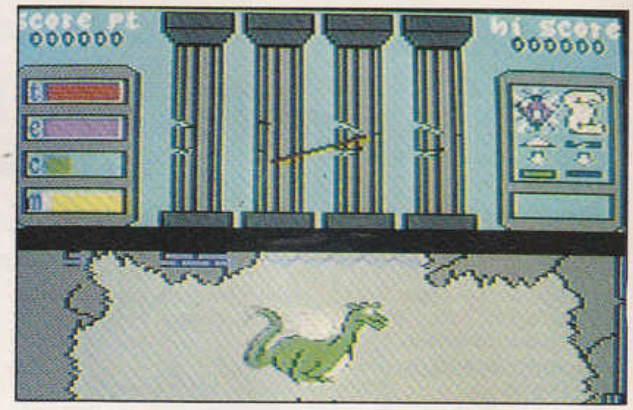
Program *International Karate* **Price** £14.95 **Supplier** Activision, 23 Pond Street, London NW3.
Re-release of graphically impressive karate game at a lower price. The animation is inferior to that in *Karate Kid 2*, as are the sonics.

Why do all the fighters look like monkeys though?

Program *Jinxter* **Price** £24.95 **Supplier** Rainbird, 74 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1PS.
Game of the Week so see relevant

***Popular* Rating:**
1–5 Gobble, gobble, gobble. A turkey. Avoid at all costs.
6–10 Serious flaws make this one for the committed only.
11–15 Good, but not that good. Should be worth the readies if you like that sort of thing.
16–20 So good it makes good look bad. Run down to the shop and buy immediately.

Rainbow Dragon



Dragons seem to be featuring in a few games recently. The latest member of the fire breathing clan to appear in pixel format is Asturias, a magical dragon.

Trapped in a temple deep underground (and what was he doing there anyway I wonder?), Asturias must find and destroy ten magical chests as well as overcoming the various hazards along the way, if he is to see daylight once more.

The dragon has more than napalm up his nose to help him on his way though. He can cast four spells: magic detection, reading magic, dispel illusion and restore.

Magic detection is useful for discovering whether a chest is enchanted, or just a pile of wood, while reading magic can be used to decipher magical writing on the pillars.

Clues to problems usually appear in these places.

Restore is the cornerstone spell of the game, and is used to clear obstacles or repair pillars. One of the main dangers is from crumbling pillars.

For a budget game the graphics are rather special, bright and colourful and very engaging. The dragon is a jolly green thing and even the sound effects are reasonable.

For only a couple of quid *Rainbow Dragon* is good value for money and if you fancy a simple arcade adventure with a measure of strategy then you can hardly go wrong.

Reviewer Duncan Evans
Rating 13
Micro C64
Price £1.99
Supplier Firebird

Madballs

Madballs is the latest game for the Amstrad CPC from Ocean. The game is loosely based on the toys of the same name.

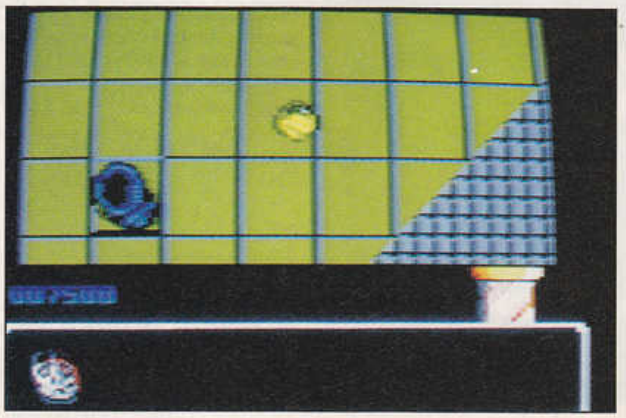
The aim is to become the top Madball on the planet ORB. You play the part of a madball called Dust Brain who is intent on creating as much mayhem and havoc as possible to become supreme ruler of Orb.

To become the head Madball you must convince the other Madballs why you should be the leader. This is done easily by beating the doubters into submission so that their skills and talents can be incorporated into Dust Brain so that he can rule forever.

Madballs is one of the most vicious and violent computer games to grace the screen.

The characters go by the names of Freaky Fullback, Skull Face, Fist Face and your character, Dust Brain. Dust Brain drinks blood for food while Fist Face eats bones and Screamin' Meemie takes coke.

The game is billed as being "freaky fun for everyone" but I feel that after a few plays you will not find it very exciting.



Initial impressions are good. The game is played a la *Bounder* – you control your ball which bounces round the screen but you must be careful and watch for the other Madballs who intend to kill you.

The game has been programmed by Denton Designs and I expected much more than a simple scrolling game. The graphics can only be described as adequate and leave much to be desired compared to previous Denton offerings. As a budget game, it would be good value but at full price it is really a joke.

On the positive side, the packaging is appealing to the impulse buyer with its cartoon-style cover and the promise of free Madball stickers. My advice is wait until this game is on budget or until it appears on one of the excellent Ocean compilations.

Reviewer Leslie Bunder
Rating 9
Micro Amstrad CPC
Price £8.95
Supplier Ocean

Out Run

Witness the phenomena, experience the sensation, salivate over the licence, and prepare for disappointment over the conversion.

Out Run has arrived, the mega smash hit driving success in the arcades appears in a C64 incarnation. The disappointment mentioned is only because the original coin-op is such a brilliant game, and the C64 version is merely good.

If you are not aware of what it's all about, let me refresh your memory. *Out Run* has you and a 'gorgeous girl' in a high performance Ferrari Testarossa sports car piling down the highways and byways, trying to complete various sections in the time allowed. Scenery flashes by on either side of an undulating road, littered at times with drivers of more sedate and less stylish motors.

The C64 version has five courses, and fifteen sets of scenery, starting at Coconut Beach. Each course is a self contained game and must be loaded separately.

Fast, smooth, detailed graphics are the hallmark of the original, and alas the old 64 just isn't up to reproducing this kind of action. The graphics of the scenery, especially the houses, are very crude, and the sensation of speed is given by flickering lines that stretch across the entire screen. The undulation is well done though, you really feel that you're going up a hill, and the game certainly is fast enough.

One of the best features of *Out Run* is that having a brush with other motorists isn't fatal, as in too many driving games. In fact it is almost as if the car had rubber bumpers, and that is all right by me.

Out Run, the C64 computer version, is a pretty decent game, it just does not look it when compared to the original. However, if you want to feel the wind in your hair and the thrill of driving through regions like Devils Canyon, then set up a hairdrier four feet away, and boot up a copy of *Out Run*.

Reviewer Duncan Evans
Rating 13
Micro C64
Price £9.95
Supplier US Gold

Marble Madness

Anyone who has ever seen the Amiga version of *Marble Madness* will agree that it is a superb piece of software. From the graphics to the music and sound effects, a five star product.

Pity then, that this ST implementation is so very disappointing. The game, for the uninitiated, features a marble which has to negotiate 3-D Escher-like surfaces, surreal plains, gullies, pathways and ramps. The landscapes become increasingly complex, convoluted and eye boggling the further you program.

The opposition to completing a level is provided by Slinkys, enemy black balls, repelling blocks and magnets, flapping bridges and many other bizarre foes.

One feature worth noting is that limitless marbles are supplied on the levels which have to be completed against a decrementing time. If you lose a marble, the action simply restarts at the beginning of the level.

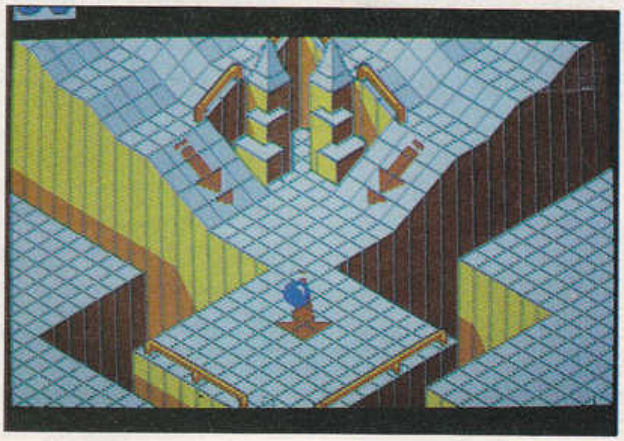
While the scenery scrolls down slowly, but smoothly, the sprites are nothing special. Nice to see the entire screen being used on an ST game though.

Two factors let this conversion down. The first is the sprite detection, which could best be described as random and rather spoils things. The second is the sound.

The music is atrocious, so watery and tuneless that you immediately want to turn it off. The sound effects are not particularly good either. Have these people never heard of sampling?

Very disappointing for ST owners that such a poor job has been done on this conversion. Only recommended if you are completely addicted to the arcade game.

Reviewer Duncan Evans
Rating 9
Micro Atari ST
Price £19.95
Supplier Electronic Arts



Software guide continued

page elsewhere in the magazine. The graphics are just the same, but it wasn't that good a week.

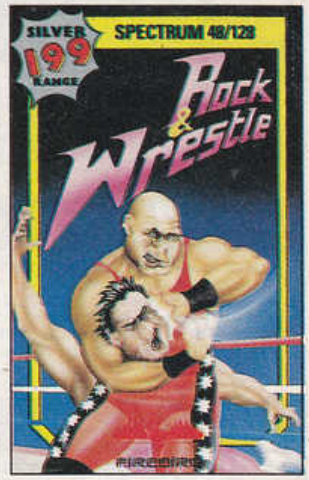
Program *Moebius* **Price** £24.95 **Supplier** Microprose, 2 Market Place, Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8DA.
Martial arts role playing strategy that fails to achieve the high standard it sets itself.

The music is quite appalling, and the animation is poor.

Apart from that it's pretty boring to play and costs far too much.

BBC B/Electron

Program *Creepy Caves* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Atlantis, 28 Station Road, London SE25 5AG.
Decent graphics lift this budget platform and ladders above the plethora of similar products. The plot is commendably silly and it's all good fun, so why not?



Commodore 64/128

Program *Deflektor* **Price** £9.99 (tape), £14.99 (disc) **Supplier** Gremlin Graphics, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS.
Interesting one this. Guide your laser beam around each screen using reflectors, refractors, mirrors, absorbers, polarisers and fibre optics.

If you fancy a change from mindless blasting and intense strategy then investigate further.

continued on page 20 ▶

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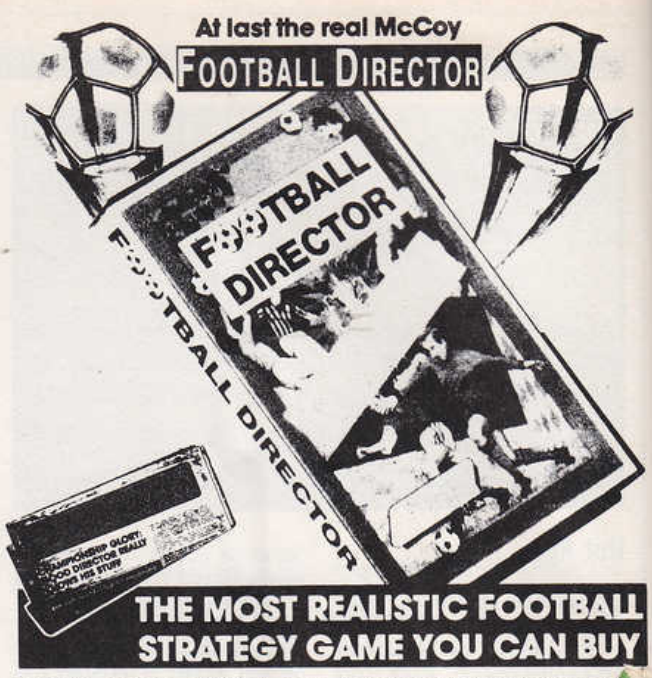

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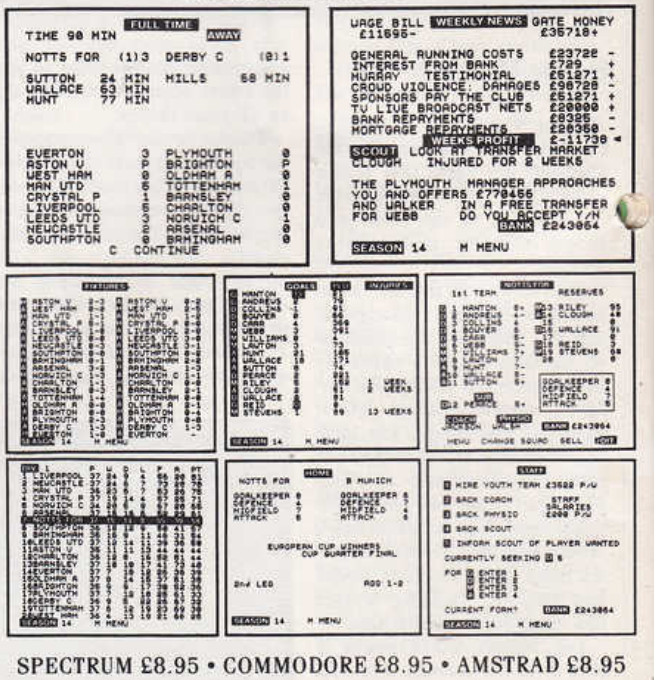

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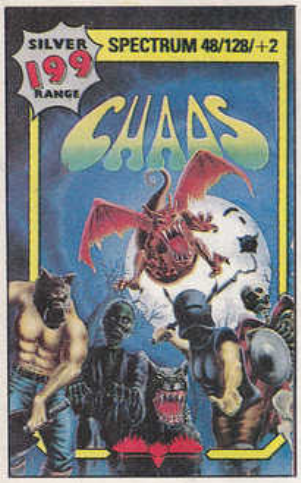
Software guide continued

◀ continued from page 17

Program *World Tour Golf* **Price** £12.95 **Supplier** Electronic Arts, Langley Business Centre, 11/49 Station Road, Langley, Berks SL3 8YN.
The only opposition to the omnipotent *Leaderboard*. Less arcade feel and more strategy, but it isn't as much fun to play and the graphics are inferior.

A split screen display shows an overview of the hole, as well as the golfer. Harder to play, so represents something of a challenge.

Program *Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer* **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Gremlin Graphics, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS.
Now available across all 8-bit formats, this clever reworking of football management themes is recommended. I'm just waiting for the ST version.



Program *Psycho Soldier* **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Imagine, 6 Central Street, Manchester M2 5NS.
The barbarian girl with the big shoulder blades hits the 64. Best version of the game recently reviewed.

Program *Orc Attack* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Top Ten, 12 Chiltern Enterprise Centre, Station Road, Theale, Berks RG7 4AA.
Well, we had *Operation SAS* last week from Top Ten, so it's no surprise to see the geriatric *Orc Attack*. Quite ridiculous that this is even being sold at all.

Program *Helldrop* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Top Ten, 12 Chiltern

Jet Bike

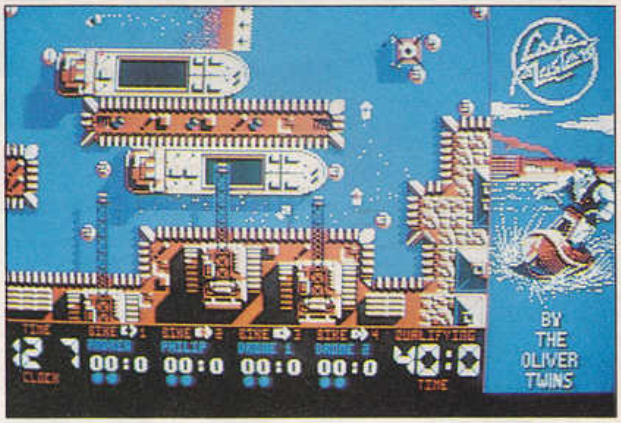
Codemasters moving upmarket? Surely not. Although the answer may appear to be yes, it really should be, not really, or even only slightly. Confused?

Let me explain *(I wish you would, Ed)*. The Plus range of games offers the usual Codemasters budget game but with lots of freebees to warrant the extra cash. The extras in the case of *Jet Bike Simulator*, written by the prolific Oliver brothers, include a badge, poster, and most importantly, an extra cassette.

With two tapes to play with Codemasters has provided a standard version of the game, an expert version, and two additional sets of courses, each with eight screens.

The first set of courses has the player zipping around lake scenes, trying to beat three other competitors, of which one can be a friend. An interesting feature to note is that you can only bump into another human player, not the computer bikes. This is a relief because otherwise anyone ending up at the back would have no chance to overtake the pack.

Although the game is entitled *Jet Bike Simulator* it could easily be *Small Blob Simulator*. The reason for this is that the courses are quite detailed, fill one non-



scrolling screen, and if the bikes were any bigger it would be a real pain trying to get round.

Not that this affects the playability one bit. Far from it really, with clockwise and anticlockwise directions and thrust it's possible to scream around very tight corners and perform some pretty neat manoeuvres.

The spray spurting from the back of the boat is a nice touch, as are the brief snatches of synthesized speech.

From a technical point of view, no one could accuse *Jet Bike* of being state of the art, but then at this sort of price, and if the game's fun to play then it doesn't really matter.

For those who get cocky enough to reckon that they've cracked the standard version of the game, and played out the extra scenes, there's the advanced version to contend with. And boy do they mean advanced. Unless you're red hot, forget it.

Simple but entertaining gameplay, decent sound effects, and long term playability will doubtless ensure that *Jet Bike Simulator* spends as long near the top of the chart as the all conquering *Grand Prix Simulator*.

Reviewer Duncan Evans
Rating 14
Micro Amstrad CPC
Price £4.99
Supplier Codemasters

Andy Capp

Cartoon hero Andy Capp has finally made it onto the computer screen, courtesy of Mirrorsoft. All your favourite characters from the cartoon strip are here, Flo, Chalkie, The Rentman and many others.

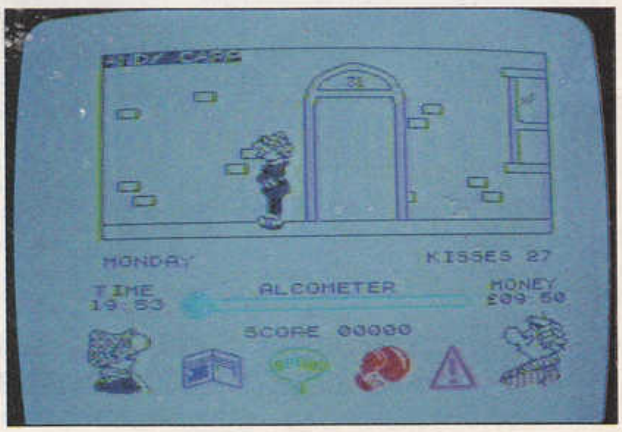
The plot consists of Andy discovering that his dole cheque has gone missing, while Flo demands some money. As Andy, you must find out who stole your cheque so that you can give Flo her wedge. But if you cannot find the cheque, you have got to obtain money by other means.

You can use the money from your last giro to place a bet on a horse. Alternatively, try and persuade some friends to lend you a few bob so that you can keep Flo happy.

Andy Capp is ideally suited to the Spectrum as the main playing area, the top half of the screen is in black and white similar to the cartoon strip.

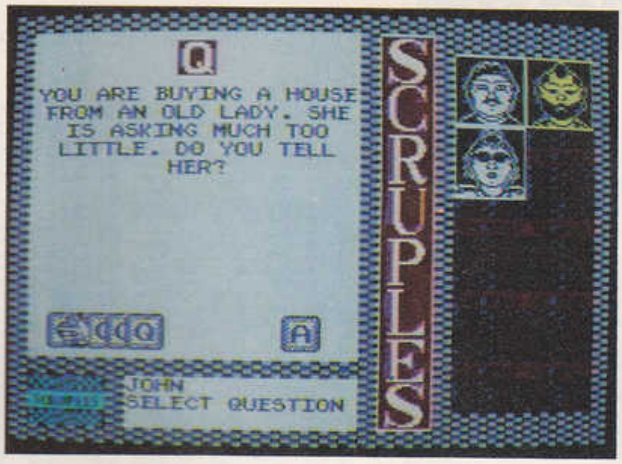
The bottom half of the screen shows the icons you can choose. The Wallet icon, for example, is used for moving money in and out of your pocket. If you want to be radical you can choose Fight, which can get you out of some tricky situations.

There are many jokes on Northerners in the game, including a rendition of the theme used on Hovis advertisements. Mirrorsoft has produced an enjoyable romp around town in ol' Andy. The graphics, while not detailed, are still impressive enough to make the game enjoyable to play. I am now awaiting the release of *Andy Capp 2* – how about Andy Capp meets up with Wally Week (remember him). Well done Mirrorsoft.



Reviewer Leslie Bunder
Rating 15
Micro Spectrum
Price £9.95
Supplier Mirrorsoft

Scruples



The question posed by the press release is that after reviewing *Scruples* from Virgin Games do you return the program to the magazine's software library, or do you steal it? Silly question really.

Thankfully, the questions posed by the game itself are far more penetrating and dilemma inspiring. It all adds to the fun and games.

Between three and ten players can participate in *Scruples*, although any number of those can be computer players. The initial options include defining a face, from 64, for the player character, as well as 12 personality traits, rated between +5 and –5.

The game commences with each player receiving a number of dilemma cards, and an answer card, which can be yes, no or depends. The idea is to dispense with all the dilemma cards, which is done by selecting a dilemma and posing it to another player. The trick is to give the dilemma to a person whose answer will match your answer card.

Equally, when being given a dilemma, reply with yes, no or depends, and then pick the reason, from a choice of four, that you responded that way. This is where it all gets complicated. If the answers match, the asking player discards the dilemma and answer cards, and receives a new answer card only. If the answers do not match then they receive a new dilemma card as well.

The asking player now has a chance to challenge the answer, regardless of whether it matches or not, and the players vote on who they believe. Bluff and counter bluff ensue.

At the end of the game the players original histogram and the modified one are displayed and everyone can accuse each other of lying, cheating and so on.

Scruples is a rather good implementation of the board game. A pleasant tune warbles away to begin with, and the graphics for the players' faces are reasonably distinctive.

Playing against the computer provides some measure of fun, but the serious laughs come when you play with a few friends, especially when the questions apply to their current circumstances.

It all depends on whether you like this style of game, but full marks to Virgin for a first class implementation anyway. In response to the question about where our review copy is going to end up – my doggybag, I think chaps.

Reviewer Duncan Evans
Rating 15
Micro Spectrum
Price £9.95
Supplier Virgin Games

Basket Master

Basket Master puts you in a head to head confrontation on a basketball court, against the computer or another player. Rather than having several different characters to control, you have only one character with which to try to shoot a few baskets.

Imagine has produced quite a nice little game for those who enjoy playing sport games. The graphics are well defined, the sound effects are good and the animation is smooth.

Each game lasts for two periods of five minutes. Each time you score a basket, there is a slow motion close up of how that basket was scored.

As in real basketball, you can also commit fouls such as touching your opponent as he is about to shoot. So you must be careful as to how you steal the ball away from him.

Playing the game is simple and easy to understand. After a few plays, I found the game very enjoyable and exciting. Imagine and the software authors Dinamic have put a great deal of effort into the game and it shows. If you like basketball, or even if you do not, *Basket Master* is highly recommended.

Hopefully Imagine will use the idea of head-to-head confrontations in some of their future sport games.

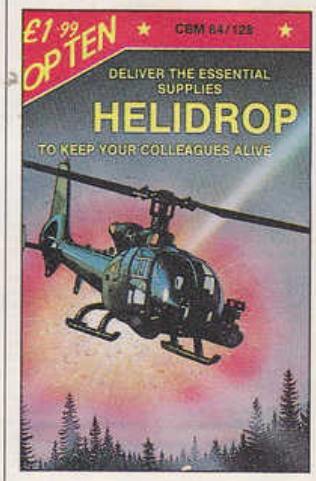
Reviewer Leslie Bunder
Rating 15
Micro Spectrum
Price £7.95
Supplier Imagine

Software guide continued

Enterprise Centre, Station Road, Theale, Berks RG7 4AA.
Simple gameplay, entirely unoriginal and plain graphics suggest that you should leave this one on the shelf.

Program *How To Be A Complete Bastard* **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Virgin Games, 2/4 Vernon Yard, Portobello Road, London W11 2DX.
You'll either be in stitches, offended or completely indifferent.

Program *Hunt For Red October* **Price** £14.95 (tape), £19.95 (disc) **Supplier** Argus Press Software,



Victory House, Leicester Place, London WC2H 7NB.
Rather expensive conversion of the ST/Amiga program which was graphically impressive but a bit dubious on the gameplay.

At this price it should have a copy of the Tom Clancy book that it's based on bundled with it.

IBM PC/Clones

Program *Space Quest II* **Price** £24.95 **Supplier** Activision, 23 Pond Street, London NW3.
Space Quest II, Vohaul's Revenge, throws Roger Wilco back into conflict with Sludge Vohaul, the evil scientist.

The chunky style of graphics look decidedly at home on the PC, and with text input and on screen 3-D arcade adventure action you really can't go wrong.

continued on page 24 ▶

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Software guide continued

◀ continued from page 21

Spectrum

Program *Tank Busters* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Firebird, Wellington House, Upper St Martin's Lane, London.

Very much a *Battlezone* style affair with the added bonus of wire guided missiles.

Seek out the lager of . . . no that's something else.

Seek out the aliens and destroy the suckers. Laudible enough quest and the wire frame 3-D graphics are good enough.

Budget software tends to be rather hit and miss, with the emphasis on the latter. Nice to report a game that is firmly in the former category.

Program *Pro Golf 2* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Atlantis, 28 Station Road, London SE25 5AG.

A golf simulation sequel for 1–4 players, featuring Royal St George's and Lytham St Annes.

Not particularly impressive and as far as I'm concerned, if it isn't *Leaderboard*, it isn't golf.

Program *Rock & Wrestle* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Firebird, Wellington House, Upper St Martin's Lane, London.

Wasn't this the Melbourne House wrestling game from a couple of years ago that everyone was particularly unimpressed with? Yes, so it was.

Program *Xen* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Top Ten, 12 Chiltern Enterprise Centre, Station Road, Theale, Berks RG7 4AA.

Finally, a re-release from more recent times from Top Ten.

Xen is a vertically scrolling shoot-'em up with lots of colour (aka *Lightforce)*, decent gameplay and it's pretty cheap to boot. A good buy.

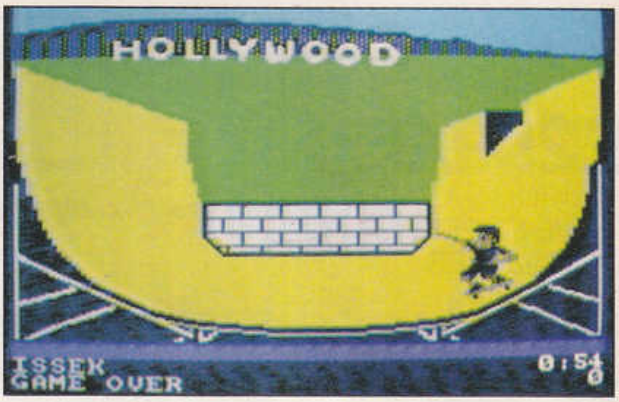
Program *Chaos* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Firebird, Wellington House, Upper St Martin's Lane, London.

I mentioned this a couple of weeks back in Hotlines.

Oh dear, it doesn't look very good at all. Still, any game which allows for eight players squeezing around a keyboard deserves a look.

Program *Sports Hero* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Firebird, Wellington

California Games



It is the first week of cold January and US Gold has finally got round to releasing the Spectrum version of *California Games.*

California Games is a multi-load event game with six different events, Half Pipe Skateboarding, Foot Bag, Surfing, Roller Skating, BMX Bike Racing and Flying Disk. In the foot bag event, you must keep the bag in the air for one minute and 15 seconds only using your feet, knees and head, while trying to perform a few stunts for extra points.

Surfing has you trying to stay near the curl of the wave and manoeuvring the board at high speeds. What all the events have in common is a need to show your skills to the full – the more skills you have, the more points you will gain.

While the game sounds exciting and the inlay card makes interesting reading, the game is let down by the way in which the graphics are defined.

Controlling the characters in the various events is also a little confusing.

The actual packaging, presentation and idea of the game are quite good. It is a real shame that these points were let down by the standard of programming.

One fun aspect of the game is the chance to choose your own sponsor from a selection of names including Ocean Pacific, Frisbee and Bluebird. Also, by purchasing the game, you have a chance to win some prizes from US Gold including surf boards and tee-shirts.

But having the chance to win a prize or choose your own sponsor does not redeem the game. US Gold could have produced something of a higher standard, *California Games* is a sad release from the company.

Reviewer Leslie Bunder
Rating 6
Micro Spectrum
Price £7.95
Supplier US Gold

Galactic Games

On the face of it, *Galactic Games* could almost be called *Flogging a Dead Horse in Space.* How many more sports games will the great British public tolerate? But *Galactic Games* has a secret weapon; some of the events are funny as well as being enjoyable. What you get are 100m Slither, Space Hockey, Psychic Judo, Head Throwing and the Metamorph Marathon.

The first event is an exciting race between two worms. It is good fun and the animation of the worms, especially when they try to super slither, is well done.

Space Hockey is a novel re-working of an old standard. The goals at either end of the pitch are black holes and if a player approaches too close, down he goes.

As the players are a sphere, judicious use of the brake is necessary to retain some measure of control over the proceedings. Space Hockey is best played against a friend; beating the computer is not so much fun.

The worst game of the five is undoubtedly Psychic Judo, an event in which the players lob balls of psychic energy at each other. Guide the ball of plasma and erect a shield to block retaliatory action.

My favourite event is head-throwing. Not the sick variety in which the player throws some poor unfortunate's noggin. In this game you leg it down the track as fast as possible, stop to get the correct angle and then off it goes – your head, that is. While it is airborne, extra lift is provided by flapping the ears.

To avoid bouncing on touchdown it is necessary to press the fire button to start the head rotating. Get it correct and your head dives nose first into the turf. Enormously funny, this is by far the best event in the collection and justifies the purchase.

The last event, the Metamorph Marathon, is a timed obstacle course. To get round successfully a number of shape changes are the order. Become a runner, burrower, jumper or flyer.

Although the graphics and sound are nothing to shout about most of the events are entertaining enough and who could resist the opportunity to throw his own head?

Reviewer Duncan Evans
Rating 13
Micro Amstrad CPC
Price £9.99 (tape), £14.99 (disc)
Supplier Activision

Wrestling

Wrestling is a much bigger game – I hesitate to use the word sport – in the States than it is in the U.K. It is a surprise, then, to witness Microprose importing *Micro League Wrestling*, an official World Wrestling Federation product.

What really is impressive about the game is the standard of the graphics. They are all digitised shots of Hulk Hogan and his two challengers, Randy 'Macho Man' Savage and Paul 'Mr Wonderful' Orndorff, in various poses as they flounce round the ring.

Rather than being an arcade-style game, like the U.S. Gold *Championship Wrestling*, ML Wrestling is apparently more strategic. After suffering the preliminaries in which the combatants are 'interviewed' by the TV channel showing the event, the clocks starts ticking and a list of your possible options appears to the left of the main display.

A strength counter measures your ability to deliver blows as frightening as The Clothes Line, while a damage counter clocks how much sense you are having knocked out of you. If you do not get off to a good start the match rapidly becomes a lost cause and the one fall needed in the 20-minute match to win soon occurs.

The action is animated, in a crude kind of way, but as this is a crude type of sport it is rather appropriate. Between two and four frames of digitised action are played rapidly to give an unconvincing illusion of movement. In true TV style the camera switches to the crowd from time to time. The only thing missing is a break for the advertisements.

Micro League Wrestling is interesting enough for about two games. After that the glamour of the digitised pictures tends to fade and the inherent boredom rises to the surface. If you are a wrestling fan the appeal will last longer but as far as I'm concerned I would rather watch margarine melt.

Reviewer Duncan Evans
Rating 10
Micro Atari ST
Price £19.95
Supplier Microprose

Bubble Bobble

Would you describe the title *Bubble Bobble* as the greatest arcade game of the year? I would not.

Bubble Bobble casts you as a small predominantly green monster which spits bubbles. The object is to leap around the platform-strewn screen, spitting the bubbles at leaping enemies. There are 100 screens to complete and eight credits with which to play.

To clear a screen you need to hit all the rampaging bogeys or whatever they are. Hitting one results in it becoming encapsulated in a bubble, which rises slowly towards the top of the screen.

To kill the nasty, burst the bubble or, in other words, stamp on the sucker. A piece of fruit springs forth, which can then be stamped on for bonus points.

There are myriad features in the form of magic targets and bonus letters. Also fire, thunder and water bubbles will help destroy the bullies quickly.

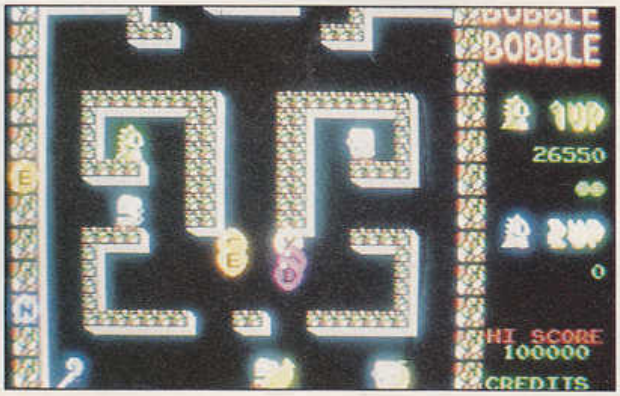
Watching the water bubbles burst and pour downhill is one of the bright spots in a generally mediocre game.

Clearing a screen quickly – and the first four or five can be cleared very quickly and very easily – allows for high point targers on the next level. Instead of squashing fruit for 2,000 points maximum, you can hit jewels and other goodies for 5,000–10,000 points.

If you take too long on a screen Baron von Blubba appears. He is indestructible, so when he appears get your finger out otherwise you have had it.

Bubble Bobble is mildly entertaining in a monotonous kind of way. It is fine for the younger games player but otherwise it lacks the kind of polish which would convince you it was really running on an Atari ST.

Reviewer Duncan Evans
Rating 10
Micro Atari ST
Price £19.95
Supplier Firebird



Software guide continued

◀ continued from page 23

House, Upper St Martin's Lane, London.
Four events feature in another Melbourne House budget re-release affair. 100 Metre Sprint, Long Jump, 110 Metre Hurdles and the Pole Vault are all you get. It may only be £1.99 but this is hardly good value, and the graphics are nothing to tell David Vine about either.

Program *The Colditz Story* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Atlantis, 28 Station

Road, London SE25 5AG.
Escape from Colditz Castle, while avoiding the guards who will have you shot at dawn if they catch you.

An arcade/strategy adventure that is reminiscent of Ocean's *The Great Escape*. Only it isn't that good.

Program *Deflektor* **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Gremlin Graphics, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS.
See Commodore 64 listing for the biz.

Program *Compendium* **Price** £0.00 **Supplier** Gremlin Graphics, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS.
Four simple games that are no worse than the other versions, considering the Spectrum's graphics.

Program *Madballs* **Price** £7.95 **Supplier** Ocean, 6 Central Street, Manchester M2.
Check out the review of the Amstrad version for relevant comments.

Private image

Peter Worlock tests out JCL's Digipic video digitiser for the Amiga.

Most of us would like to be able to produce the kind of graphics the Mirrorsoft Cinemaware range have made commonplace in games like *Defender of the Crown* and, most recently, *King of Chicago*. The trouble is that most of us do not have the artistic talents to draw anything except *Invasion of the Matchstick Men*, but if you have an Amiga, a video camera and a spare £300, an easy solution is at hand.

The JCL Digipic video digitiser allows you to capture video images and use them in almost any Amiga software. That is reputed to be how Palace Software translated the realistic movements of the protagonists in *Barbarian*. Now you, too, can have your friends act scenes from your latest epic, grab sequences using Digipic, touch up the images in *Deluxe Paint* and then use the resulting graphics in your masterpiece.

The digitiser is a large black box, about the size of two external disc drives, which connects to the Amiga parallel port. A cable from the video camera plugs into the rear of the Digipic unit and then you power up everything, load the software and start shooting.

Although the system is designed specifically to work with a video camera you can use any other suitable video source, such as a video recorder, which is what I used for this review. A suitable cable is easily available from most hi-fi and electronics stores but I made one by butchering two spare TV interface leads.

Hooked to the TV

Using the software was simple. If you are using a camera it helps to have a separate monitor in addition to the Amiga monitor for displaying the camera image. That helps with focusing, contrast and other initial setting-up. With a video recorder, of course, you can leave it hooked to the TV as usual.

When you have a suitable image you select Digitise from the menu bar and Digipic grabs a frame and displays it on the Amiga monitor. An additional video display is not essential, since you can have Digipic constantly grab a sequence of images and display them successively on the Amiga. When you see one you like you press the Escape key and Digipic keeps that one and breaks out of the loop.

I found the system gave excellent results from both TV signals and pre-recorded video tapes. Digipic really works in mono and will give first-class black and white images using a 16 level grey scale. An additional adaptor is supplied to reside between Digipic and the Amiga which gives an extended 32-level grey scale and this produces correspondingly better images.

Masking out

The only disadvantage to using extended grey scale pictures is that the adaptor must be present on the Amiga whenever the images are to be loaded, even if you want to put them into another program. This means that you cannot pass on a disc of EGSA pictures unless the recipient also has the EGSA adaptor.

All this is not to say that Digipic cannot work in colour . . . but the process is a little more complex. Supplied with the package are three colour filters in red, green and blue. These are fitted to your camera and used in sequence. Digipic takes three images with the filters masking out the corresponding colours and the three resulting pictures are merged to give a fairly accurate colour image.

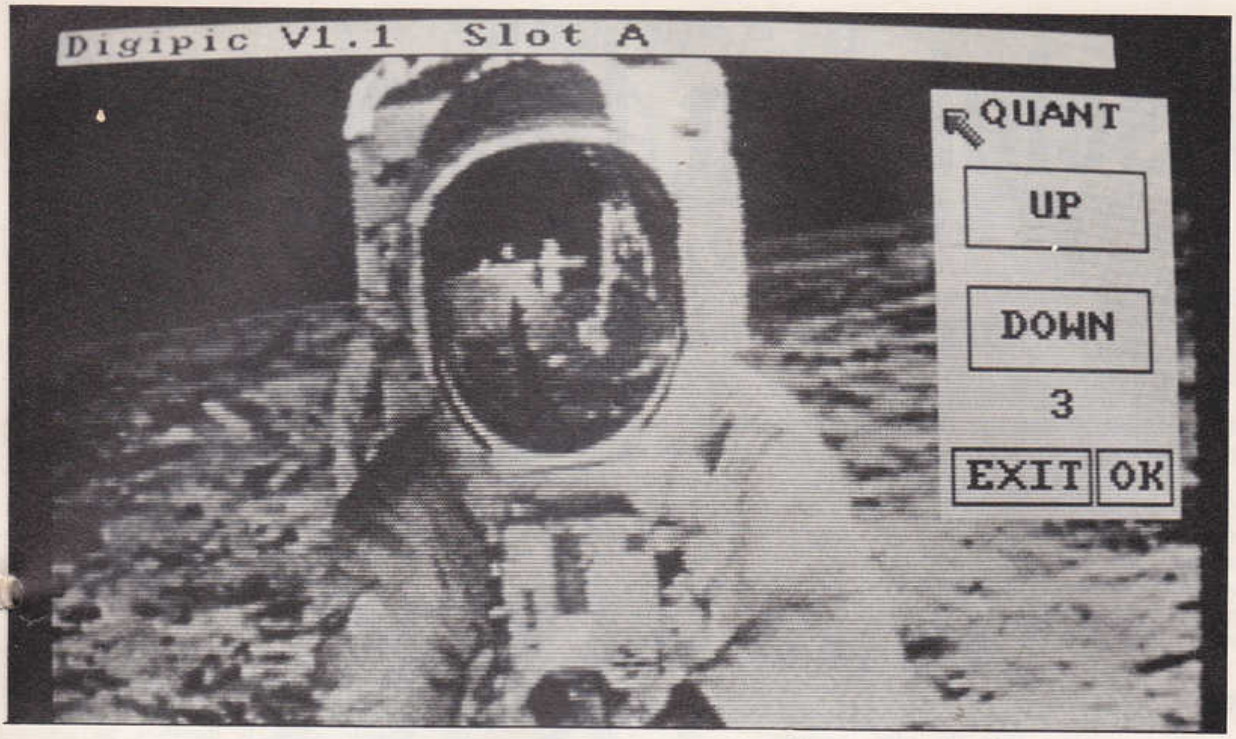
Rock-steady camera

How accurate it is depends on the quality of the camera, lighting, and having a rock-steady camera during the three shots. The results, the manual implies, range from excellent to poor. Once you have captured a suitable image the first thing to do is to save it. The Digipic software allows you to save in a variety of formats, depending on what you want to do with the image. Since a screenful of bit-planes occupies a good deal of memory you can save a file in compressed form, which saves disc space but might give problems if your other software cannot read the format.

The other main option is to specify the number of bit-planes to be saved. Digipic uses six planes in monochrome to store higher-resolution pictures than most software. If you want to load the image back into Digipic you must save six planes.

Some programs like Deluxe Paint will not accept six planes so you can choose four- or five-plane formats. Generally, four are used for monochrome pictures and five planes for colour.

Finally, you also have the choice of saving only a part of the whole screen image, which uses considerably less disc space.



The software also provides a series of image-processing tools which can be used to enhance a poor-quality image. They include the ability to affect the brightness of each pixel, the contrast between neighbouring pixels and the opportunity of clipping very light and very dark grey levels from the scale.

Two other options allow you to spread the range of greys across the full 16 levels, producing a more even tone. It is great fun experimenting with these tools and some interesting graphic effects can be produced but I found that, from the video recorder at least, the first image produced by Digipic was excellent and using the tools always resulted in a reduction in quality.

The only other comment on the software tools is that they form the basis of my only complaint about the system, and it is a minor one, anyway. Some of the tools take time to complete their task but there is no indicator of that. If you pull down a menu while some image processing is taking place you get a ghosting effect in the main picture. Use of the "busy" icon on the mouse pointer would cure this simple fault.

More interesting is the ability to port your digitised image into Deluxe Paint or something similar and you can then touch up lines, altering the contrast and adding colour. From there you can do almost anything with it, including using the resulting images in your programs, including Basic.

The real question is ultimately what you might expect to do with a video digitiser and the honest answer for the moment is "not much". The system is great fun to play with and, provided that you are prepared to do a good deal of work touching-up pictures you can use them in a variety of programs.

If you do not have a video camera all the images available to you are strictly copyright and you could not use them in any commercial program.

Estate agents

Perhaps the major use will be in compiling a video database. With a camera attached to a copying stand, you could create a file of Amiga pictures – of photographs, book covers, technical drawings, architects' plans and so on. Estate agents could hold a database of properties for sale, complete with a picture of each house. These can be compiled into one of several commercial database packages which support pictorial as well as textual data.

Suffice it to say that if you can think of an application which requires, or would be improved by the ability to use real-world images on your Amiga, the Digipic system is excellent. The hardware was well-built and reliable, while the software is virtually flawless. □

Product: JCL Digipic
Price £299 plus VAT
Supplier Precision Software, 6 Park Terrace, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 7JZ

Disciple on the cheap?

John Wase reviews the Miles-Gordon + D Disc Interface.

The +D is full of surprises. The first is the size of the box - scarcely big enough to hold a large paperback; the second is the interface - not much bigger than a pack of cards and probably not so thick. I was expecting something similar to the Rockfort Disciple but this is a new and different beast. Neat, tidy; gone is the hot plastic Disciple box with the +2 dangling uneasily above; this is metal, sticks out behind and runs cool - only one PAL instead of two; with a near LED atop which shows it is powered - it is extinguished during disc operations.

Size

It is not much wider than the edge connector in front; there is just room for disc ribbon cable and printer ribbon cable connectors - standard BBC types - at the back. No joystick port, no through port - get out your microslots - no network, no disable button.

At first it crashed in 128K mode; with my arrogance I had started without reading the manual. The first page of text indicates clearly that for a 128+2 "go into EDIT mode and select SCREEN to avoid problems later". Problems? They mean it. This is fiddly and could perhaps have been avoided but I soon got used to it. Once operating, it is very like the Disciple but with improvements.

Formatting

There is the same formatting - up to 800K per disc depending on drive; two drives served - and all the usual facilities for saving, loading, verifying, re-naming and copying files. There are many files, too - Basic, code, screen, number and character arrays. Microdrive files, "special" files and execute - auto-running code - files; and 48K and 128K snapshots.

The snapshot button next to the LED takes a snapshot of the whole memory, either 48K or 128K. It is not intended as a competitor of Multiface interfaces and will not permit Pokes; nor is there a toolkit.

I tested it with Tasword +2 with the Disciple patch, as saved on a Disciple. It loaded it admirably; it really is compatible with Disciple discs and the snapshot button worked, taking around 15 seconds to save the whole 128K on my geriatric drive; re-loading took an impressive eight seconds.

The snapshot button plus other keys will also dump small screens on almost any printer and A4 screens on Epson-compatibles with full grey scale.

Finally, unlike Disciple, you can abort any unintended snapshot; I dropped a disc on it by mistake by pressing "X", a useful addition.

The printer port works well - it must to do screen dumps - and will work as a stand-alone parallel interface. Unlike the Disciple, you do not need to boot the system disc or load a systems tape. This has been re-designed from Disciple days and is now much easier to follow; I preferred the blue screen, too.

Alterations

I noticed, however, that single density systems are no longer catered for. There are other alterations in the operating system.

The system file now boots to a different location; in the Disciple it loaded first then moved down into the operating area, with some duplication. With this and the removal of the network code there is now some 2·75K of paged RAM left for the user; for example, to insert extension Basic directly or from the boot program to allow random access files, the hardware is arranged for ready acess from Basic to a disc sector.

Quirks

Port addresses differ from the Disciple 5, 6 and 7. +D uses 2, 3 and 4, the same as Microdrives. It is therefore no longer Microdrive- or Discovery-compatible - no point in a disable button; nor ZX printer-compatible, but should run with other peripherals like Kempston interfaces, mice and midi. Additional quirks Disciple had with its streams and channels have also been sorted out.

The 24-page A5 manual is well produced and clearly written with examples and answers to potential queries. Sources of information for more advanced users are indicated, principally from INDUG, the user group, which has a useful hot-line for burning problems.

The review sample had several PCB modifications, proof that testing had revealed problems which had been rectified: my issue seemed fairly bug-free. Notches for ribbon cable connectors were hand-filed in the metal.

I enquired and was told that production interfaces would have re-designed PCBs and properly-notched cases with the company logo painted on.

I thought the +D worked well. It works with all Spectrums except the +3 - a pity this has no ROMCS line - and on its own at £49.95 or with a 780K capacity drive at £129.95 offers good value for those seeking an upgrade.

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PCW3

A game of squares

A Campbell Black

This program is a game for two players. It is based on the pencil and paper game where you join the dots and try to complete more boxes than your opponent. All the playing instructions are included with the program. If you are using a Spectrum with a rubber keyboard, the cursor keys are CAPS SHIFT with 5, 6, 7 or 8. Otherwise, the ordinary cursor keys do the work.

The program shows how windows can be used to make a simple game look far more appealing than it would when printing things straight on to the screen. □

Spectrum Plus 2.

```
1000 REM *****************
1010 REM A GAME OF SQUARES
1020 REM  Author: C.Black
1040 REM         1987
1050 REM     VERSION 2.2
1060 REM *****************
1070 REM
1075 REM
1080 REM ** INITIALISE **
1100 GO SUB 9500
1160 DIM N$(2,12)
1165 DIM C$(4)
1180 LET FLAGS=0
1185 INK 9: POKE 23658,8
1190 LET W$="GAME  WINNER": LET U$="MATCH WINNER"
1220 REM **DRAW SCREEN**
1240 BORDER 5: PAPER 5: INK 0: CLS
1260 PRINT AT 1,1; PAPER 6; INK 9;" A GAME OF SQUARES  ACB 1987 "; PAPER 5;AT 1
,0;CHR$ 132;AT 2,0;: GO SUB 9300
1280 PLOT 7,159: DRAW 241,0: DRAW 0,9: DRAW -241,0: DRAW 0,-9
1300 PRINT AT 3,0;CHR$ 132: FOR n=4 TO 16: PRINT AT n,0;CHR$ 133: NEXT n
1320 PRINT AT 17,0;: GO SUB 9350
1340 PLOT 7,39: DRAW 113,0: DRAW 0,113: DRAW -113,0: DRAW 0,-113
1360 PRINT AT 3,16;CHR$ 132: FOR n=4 TO 16: PRINT AT n,16;CHR$ 133: NEXT n
1380 PRINT AT 17,16;: GO SUB 9350
1400 PLOT 135,39: DRAW 113,0: DRAW 0,113: DRAW -113,0: DRAW 0,-113
1420 FOR n=3 TO 16: PRINT  PAPER 3;AT n,17;"                ": NEXT n
1440 PRINT  PAPER 4;AT 4,18;n$(1); PAPER 6;AT 15,18;n$(2)
1460 PRINT  PAPER 7;AT 9,18;"GAME ";AT 9,25;"GAMES";AT 10,18;"SCORE";AT 10,25;"
WON "
1480 PRINT  PAPER 7;AT 7,20;"00";AT 7,26;"00";AT 12,20;"00";AT 12,26;"00"
1500 PRINT AT 19,0;CHR$ 133; PAPER 6;"GAME "; PAPER 7;"00"; PAPER 6;" OF "; PAPE
R 7;"00"
1520 PRINT AT 20,0;: GO SUB 9400
1540 PLOT 7,15: DRAW 105,0: DRAW 0,9: DRAW -105,0: DRAW 0,-9
1560 PRINT AT 18,14;CHR$ 132; PAPER 3;"                "
1580 PRINT AT 19,14;CHR$ 133; PAPER 3;"                "
1600 PRINT AT 20,14;CHR$ 133; PAPER 3;"                "
1620 PRINT AT 21,14;: GO SUB 9450
1640 PLOT 7,15: DRAW 105,0: DRAW 0,9: DRAW -105,0: DRAW 0,-9
1660 PLOT 119,7: DRAW 129,0: DRAW 0,25: DRAW -129,0: DRAW 0,-25
```

```
1680 PLOT 143,47: DRAW 97,0: DRAW 0,9: DRAW -97,0: DRAW 0,-9
1700 PLOT 143,135: DRAW 97,0: DRAW 0,9: DRAW -97,0: DRAW 0,-9
1720 PLOT 143,87: DRAW 41,0: DRAW 0,17: DRAW -41,0: DRAW 0,-17
1740 PLOT 199,87: DRAW 41,0: DRAW 0,17: DRAW -41,0: DRAW 0,-17
1760 PLOT 207,111: DRAW 17,0: DRAW 0,9: DRAW -17,0: DRAW 0,-9
1780 PLOT 159,111: DRAW 17,0: DRAW 0,9: DRAW -17,0: DRAW 0,-9
1800 PLOT 207,71: DRAW 17,0: DRAW 0,9: DRAW -17,0: DRAW 0,-9
1820 PLOT 159,71: DRAW 17,0: DRAW 0,9: DRAW -17,0: DRAW 0,-9
1840 GO SUB 3040
1850 PRINT  PAPER 8; INK 9;AT 18,15;" "; INVERSE 1;"I"; INVERSE 0;"NSTRUCTIONS"
1852 PRINT  PAPER 8; INK 9;AT 19,15;" "; INVERSE 1;"S"; INVERSE 0;"TART";AT 20,1
5;" PRESS A KEY"
1855 BEEP .05,15
1860 PAUSE 0: LET I$=INKEY$
1865 IF I$="I" THEN  GO SUB 9000:: GO SUB 3242: GO SUB 9200: GO TO 1840
1870 IF I$="S" THEN  GO TO 1900
1880 GO TO 1860
1895 REM **NEW PLAYERS NAMES **
1900 BEEP .05,10
1905 PAPER 8: GO SUB 3242
1910  LET NN=1: FOR Y=4 TO 15 STEP 11: LET X=19
1911 LET P$="          "
1912 PRINT AT 18,15; INK 9;"INSERT NAME OF";AT 19,15;"PLAYER ";NN;" THEN";AT 20,
15;"PRESS "; INVERSE 1;"ENTER"
1915 PRINT AT Y,X; FLASH 1;" ";
1920 PAUSE 0: LET I$=INKEY$: BEEP .005,20
1925 IF I$>="A" AND I$<="Z" AND X<=28 THEN  LET P$(X-18)=I$: PRINT AT Y,X;I$: LE
T X=X+1: GO TO 1915
1928 IF I$=CHR$ 12 THEN  PRINT AT Y,X;" ": LET X=X-(1 AND X>19): LET P$(X-18)="
": GO TO 1915
1930 IF I$=CHR$ 13 THEN  PRINT AT Y,X;" ": LET N$(NN,2 TO 11)=P$: LET NN=NN+1: N
EXT Y: GO TO 2000
1940 GO TO 1920
1960 REM
1980 REM
1990 REM **GAMES IN MATCH**
2000 LET P$="  ": LET Y=19: LET X=12
2010 GO SUB 3242: PRINT  INK 9;AT 18,15;"INSERT MAXIMUN";AT 19,15;"NUMBER OF GAM
ES";AT 20,15;"IN MATCH"
2020 PRINT AT Y,X; FLASH 1;" "; FLASH 0;" "
2030 PAUSE 0: LET I$=INKEY$: BEEP .005,20: IF I$<"0" OR I$>"9" THEN  GO TO 2030
2035 LET P$(1)=I$: PRINT AT Y,X;P$(1); FLASH 1;" "
2040 PAUSE 0: LET I$=INKEY$: BEEP .005,20: IF I$=CHR$ 13 THEN  LET P$="0"+P$(1):
 GO TO 2060
2050 IF I$<"0" OR I$>"9" THEN  GO TO 2040
2055 LET P$(2)=I$
2060 LET MATCH=VAL P$: PRINT AT Y,X;P$: IF MATCH=0 THEN  GO TO 2000
2065 GO SUB 3242: PRINT  INK 9;AT 18,15;"PRESS "; INVERSE 1;"ENTER"; INVERSE 0;"
 TO";AT 19,15;"CONFIRM OR ANY";AT 20,15;"KEY TO CORRECT"
2070 PAUSE 0: IF INKEY$<>CHR$ 13 THEN  GO TO 2000
2080 LET GAME=1: LET G1=0: LET G2=0
2085 REM **NEW GAME **
2086 PRINT AT 19,6;"0" AND GAME<10;GAME
2100 GO SUB 3242: PRINT AT 18,15; INK 9; PAPER 8;;"  CURSOR KEYS";AT 19,15;"  MO
VE ARROWS.";AT 20,15; INVERSE 1;"ENTER"; INVERSE 0;" DRAWS LINE": BEEP .05,15
2200 DIM h$(7,7): DIM v$(7,7): DIM b$(6,6)
2220 IF FLAGS THEN  GO SUB 9200: GO SUB 3040
2240: LET sc1=0: LET sc2=0: LET c$=CHR$ 144+CHR$ 145+CHR$ 146+CHR$ 147: LET x=1:
 LET y=1: LET CURPL=0: LET FLAG=0
```

```
2260 IF NOT FLAG THEN  LET CURPL=NOT CURPL
2280 IF FLAG THEN  LET FLAG=NOT FLAG
2320 PRINT  PAPER 7;AT 7,20;"0" AND sc1<10;SC1;AT 12,20;"0" AND sc2<10;SC2
2340 IF SC1>=19 OR SC2>=19 THEN  GO TO 3260: REM END OF GAME SEQUENCE
2345 IF SC1+SC2=36 THEN  GO TO 3400
2350 PRINT AT 4,18; PAPER 4; FLASH CURPL;N$ (1);AT 15,18; FLASH 0; FLASH NOT CUR
PL; PAPER 6;N$(2)
2360 PRINT AT 16-2*y,2*x; OVER 1; PAPER CODE B$(X,Y)-25;c$( TO 2);AT 17-2*y,2*x;
c$(3 TO )
2380 PAUSE 0: LET i=CODE INKEY$
2400 IF i=8 AND c$=CHR$ 144+CHR$ 145+CHR$ 146+CHR$ 147 THEN  GO SUB 3180: LET x=
x-(1 AND x>1): GO TO 2360
2420 IF i=9 AND c$=CHR$ 148+CHR$ 149+CHR$ 150+CHR$ 151 THEN  GO SUB 3180: LET x=
x+(1 AND x<6): GO TO 2360
2440 IF i=10 AND c$=CHR$ 152+CHR$ 153+CHR$ 154+CHR$ 155 THEN  GO SUB 3180: LET y
=y-(1 AND y>1): GO TO 2360
2460 IF i=11 AND c$=CHR$ 156+CHR$ 157+CHR$ 158+CHR$ 159 THEN  GO SUB 3180: LET y
=y+(1 AND y<6): GO TO 2360
2480 IF i>=8 AND i<=11 THEN  GO SUB 3180: FOR Z=1 TO 4: LET C$(Z)=CHR$ (143+Z+(I
-8)*4): NEXT Z: GO TO 2360
2500 IF i<>13 THEN  GO TO 2380
2520 LET i=((CODE c$(1)-144)/4)+8
2580 IF i=8 AND v$(x,y)=" " THEN  LET v$(x,y)="*": GO TO 2650
2600 IF i=9 AND v$(x+1,y)=" " THEN  LET v$(x+1,y)="*": GO TO 2650
2620 IF i=10 AND h$(x,y)=" " THEN  LET h$(x,y)="*": GO TO 2650
2640 IF i=i1 AND h$(x,y+1)=" " THEN  LET h$(x,y+1)="*": GO TO 2650
2645 GO TO 2380
2650 GO SUB 3180
2655 PLOT (x+(i=9))*16,(y+(i=11))*16+32: DRAW 16*(i=10 OR i=11),16*(i=8 OR i=9)
2657 BEEP .05,2
2660 IF i<>8 THEN  GO TO 2760
2680 IF v$(x+1,y)="*" AND h$(x,y)="*" AND h$(x,y+1)="*" THEN  LET XX=X: LET YY=Y
: GO SUB 3200
2700 IF X=1 THEN  GO TO 2260
2720 IF v$(x-1,y)="*" AND h$(x-1,y)="*" AND h$(x-1,y+1)="*" THEN  LET XX=X-1: LE
T YY=Y: GO SUB 3200
2740 GO TO 2260
2760 IF i<>9 THEN  GO TO 2860
2780 IF v$(x,y)="*" AND h$(x,y)="*" AND h$(x,y+1)="*" THEN  LET XX=X: LET YY=Y:
GO SUB 3200
2800 IF X=6 THEN  GO TO 2260
2820 IF v$(x+2,y)="*" AND h$(x+1,y)="*" AND h$(x+1,y+1)="*" THEN  LET XX=X+1: LE
T YY=Y: GO SUB 3200
2840 GO TO 2260
2860 IF i<>10 THEN  GO TO 2960
2880 IF h$(x,y+1)="*" AND v$(x,y)="*" AND v$(x+1,y)="*" THEN  LET XX=X: LET YY=Y
: GO SUB 3200
2900 IF Y=1 THEN  GO TO 2260
2920  IF h$(x,y-1)="*" AND v$(x+1,y-1)="*" AND v$(x,y-1)="*" THEN  LET XX=X: LET
 YY=Y-1: GO SUB 3200
2940 GO TO 2260
2960 IF h$(x,y)="*" AND v$(x,y)="*" AND v$(x+1,y)="*" THEN  LET XX=X: LET YY=Y:
GO SUB 3200
2980 IF Y=6 THEN  GO TO 2260
3000 IF h$(x,y+2)="*" AND v$(x+1,y+1)="*" AND v$(x,y+1)="*" THEN  LET XX=X: LET
YY=Y+1: GO SUB 3200
3020 GO TO 2260
3040 REM *** DRAW DOTS ***
3060 FOR n=3 TO 16: PRINT  PAPER 7;AT n,1;"                "; NEXT n
3080 LET yc=48
```

```
3100 FOR u=1 TO 7: LET xc=16
3120 FOR a=1 TO 7: PLOT xc,yc
3140 LET xc=xc+16: NEXT a: LET yc=yc+16: NEXT u
3160 RETURN
3170 REM **PRINT ARROW**
3180 PRINT  OVER 1; PAPER 8;AT 16-2*y,2*x;c$( TO 2);AT 17-2*y,2*x;c$(3 TO ): RET
URN
3190 REM **COMPLETED SQUARE**
3200 IF B$(XX,YY)<>" " THEN  RETURN
3220 IF CURPL THEN  LET B$(XX,YY)=CHR$ 29: LET FLAG=1: LET SC1=SC1+1: PRINT  OVE
R 1; PAPER 4;AT 16-2*YY,2*XX;"  ";AT 17-2*YY,2*XX;"  ": BEEP .05,5: RETURN
3240 LET B$(XX,YY)=CHR$ 31: LET FLAG=1: LET SC2=SC2+1: PRINT  OVER 1; PAPER 6;AT
 16-2*YY,2*XX;"  ";AT 17-2*YY,2*XX;"  ": BEEP .05,5: RETURN
3241 REM ** CLEAR COMMAND BOX **
3242 FOR N=18 TO 20: PRINT  PAPER 3;AT N,15;"                ": NEXT N: RETURN
3250 REM ** END OF GAME **
3251 REM **GAME WON**
3255 GO SUB 3242
3260 GO SUB 3242
3262 IF SC1>=19 THEN  LET G1=G1+1:
3265 IF SC2>=19 THEN  LET G2=G2+1:
3267 PRINT AT 7,26;"0" AND G1<10;G1;AT 12,26;"0" AND G2<10;G2
3270 IF G1>INT (MATCH/2) OR G2>INT (MATCH/2) THEN  GO TO 3500
3275 IF G1+G2=MATCH THEN  GO TO 3600
3280 PRINT AT 5,18; PAPER 4; FLASH 1;W$ AND SC1>=19
3282 PRINT AT 14,18; PAPER 6; FLASH 1;W$ AND SC2>=19
3290 FOR N=1 TO 3: BEEP .1,N-1: BEEP .1,N: NEXT N: BEEP .2,N: NEXT N
3300 PRINT  INK 9; PAPER 8;AT 18,15;" PRESS ANY KEY";AT 19,15;" FOR NEXT GAME";:
 PAUSE 0
3305 GO SUB 3242: LET FLAGS=1: PRINT  PAPER 3;AT 5,18;"            ";AT 14,18;"

3306 PLOT 143,56: DRAW 97,0: PLOT 143,135: DRAW 97,0
3310 LET GAME=GAME+1: GO TO 2085
3330 FOR N=1 TO 3: BEEP .1,N-1: BEEP .1,N: NEXT N: BEEP .2,N: NEXT N
3340 FOR n=1 TO 6: BEEP .1,n: BEEP .1,n+1: BEEP .1,n+2: NEXT n: BEEP .2,n: BEEP
.2,N: BEEP .3,N+1
3370 STOP
3400 REM **GAME DRAWN**
3410  GO SUB 3242: PRINT  INK 9;AT 18,17; INK 9; PAPER 8;" "; FLASH 1;"GAME DRAW
N"; FLASH 0;" ";: BEEP .1,11: BEEP .1,2: BEEP .1,3: PRINT  INK 9; PAPER 8;AT 19,
15;" PRESS ANY KEY";AT 20,15;"   TO REPLAY": PAUSE 0: LET FLAGS=1: GO TO 2085
3500 REM **MATCH WON**
3505 GO SUB 3242
3520 PRINT AT 5,18; PAPER 4; FLASH 1;U$ AND G1>INT (MATCH/2)
3525 PRINT AT 14,18; PAPER 6; FLASH 1;U$ AND G2>INT (MATCH/2)
3530 FOR n=1 TO 6: BEEP .1,n: BEEP .1,n+1: BEEP .1,n+2: NEXT n: BEEP .2,n: BEEP
.2,N: BEEP .3,N+1
3535 PRINT AT 18,15; PAPER 8; INK 9;"  "; INVERSE 1;"N"; INVERSE 0;"EW MATCH";AT
 19,15;"  "; INVERSE 1;"Q"; INVERSE 0;"UIT";AT 20,15;"  PRESS A KEY"
3540 PAUSE 0: LET I$=INKEY$
3542 IF I$="Q" THEN  STOP
3544 IF I$="N" THEN  GO TO 3550
3545 GO TO 3540
3550 GO SUB 3242: PRINT  PAPER 3;AT 5,18;"            ";AT 14,18;"            "
3552 PLOT 143,56: DRAW 97,0: PLOT 143,135: DRAW 97,0
3555 GO SUB 3242: PRINT  PAPER 8; INK 9;AT 18,15;" "; INVERSE 1;"S"; INVERSE 0;"
AME PLAYERS";AT 19,15;" "; INVERSE 1;"N"; INVERSE 0;"EW PLAYERS";AT 20,15;" PRES
S A KEY"
3556 PAUSE 0: LET I$=INKEY$
3558 IF I$="N" THEN  GO TO 3570
3559 IF I$="S" THEN  GO TO 3580
```

```
3560 GO TO 3556
3570 GO SUB 9200: GO SUB 3040: PRINT  PAPER 8;AT 4,18;"              ";AT 15,18;"
          ": GO SUB 3590: GO TO 1895
3580 GO SUB 9200: GO SUB 3040: PRINT  PAPER 8;AT 14,18;N$(1);AT 15,18;N$(2): GO
SUB 3590: GO TO 1990
3590 PRINT  PAPER 8;AT 7,20;"00";AT 7,26;"00";AT 12,20;"00";AT 12,26;"00";AT 19,
6;"00";AT 19,12;"00": LET FLAGS=0: RETURN
3600 REM **MATCH DRAWN**
3610 GO SUB 3242: PRINT AT 18,15; INK 9;"  MATCH DRAWN "
3620 FOR n=1 TO 6: BEEP .1,n: BEEP .1,n+1: BEEP .1,n+2: NEXT n: BEEP .2,n: BEEP
.2,N: BEEP .3,N+1
3630 PRINT  INK 9;AT 19,15;"  PRESS ANY KEY": PAUSE 0: GO SUB 3242: GO TO 3535
9000 REM **INSTRUCTIONS**
9020 RESTORE 9100
9030 FOR M=1 TO 2
9035 GO SUB 3242
9036 GO SUB 9200
9040 FOR P=3 TO 16: READ A$: PRINT AT P,1;: FOR Q=1 TO LEN A$: BEEP .005,10: PRI
NT A$(Q);: NEXT Q: NEXT P
9050 PRINT AT 19,15; PAPER 8; INK 9;" PRESS ANY KEY": BEEP .05,15: PAUSE 0
9060 NEXT M: RETURN
9100 DATA "","A Game for two","players.","","Join the dots","with a line","and c
omplete a","square to win","a point.","","One line per","turn. An extra","turn w
hen you","win a point."
9110 DATA "First player","to score more","than 18 points","wins the","current ga
me.","","Your aim is to","win more than","half of the","maximum no.","of games i
n ","the match.","","GOOD LUCK!"
9190 REM **CLEAR GAME BOX**
9200 PAPER 7: FOR K=3 TO 16: PRINT AT K,1;"                ": NEXT K: RETURN
9300 PRINT CHR$ 129;: FOR N=1 TO 29: PRINT CHR$ 131;: NEXT N
9310 PRINT CHR$ 130: RETURN
9350 PRINT CHR$ 129;: FOR N=1 TO 13: PRINT CHR$ 131;: NEXT N
9351 PRINT CHR$ 130;: RETURN
9400 PRINT CHR$ 129;: FOR N=1 TO 12: PRINT CHR$ 131;: NEXT N
9410 PRINT CHR$ 130;: RETURN
9450 PRINT CHR$ 129;: FOR N=1 TO 15: PRINT CHR$ 131;: NEXT N
9460 PRINT CHR$ 130;: RETURN
9500 REM **UDGs**
9510 RESTORE 9600
9520 FOR n=USR "a" TO USR "a"+127
9530 READ d: POKE n,d: NEXT n: RETURN
9600 DATA 0,0,0,4,12,28,63,127,0,0,0,0,0,0,248,248,127,63,28,12,4,0,0,0,248,248,
0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,31,31,0,0,0,32,48,56,252,254,31,31,0,0,0,0,0,0,254,252,5
6,48,32,0,0,0,0,0,0
9610 DATA 3,3,3,3,3,0,0,0,192,192,192,192,192,3,3,31,15,7,3,1,0,192,192,248,240,
224,192,128,0,0,1,3,7,15,31,3,3,0,128,192,224,240,248,192,192,3,3,3,3,3,0,0,0,19
2,192,192,192,192,0,0,0
```

Pay attention!

From now on we are requesting that you include a suitable stamped addressed envelope for return of your submission. Not enclosing a suitable SAE will mean that your program will not be returned. You have been warned.

With regards to future submissions we are looking for articles on programming in general, utility programs and applications software and lastly, good games. Here are a few types of program we don't want: Educational, hangman, pools predictors, mastermind, flashing borders, bank accounts, disc catalogues and clocks.

Please do not telephone regarding any queries or problems with the listings. If you cannot get a program listing in the magazine to work, write to me, care of *Popular Computing*, and I will deal with it as soon as possible.

If there were problems then we will let you know. Corrections normally appear a couple of weeks later.

Thanks. □

Kenn Garroch
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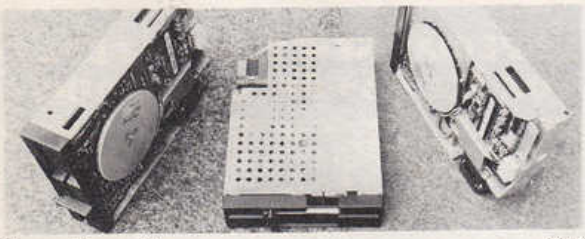

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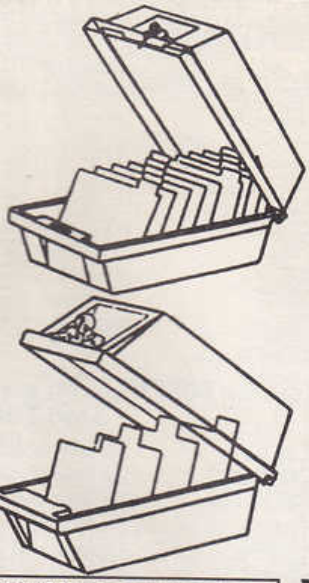

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The companies are too big to argue with so we sit and take it. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has had many a complaint about software being advertised but not ready. The ASA has no real teeth, only gums, so it cannot do much apart from suck.

I am a freelance games designer and graphic artist and it annoys me that all the foregoing happens and companies get away with it.

In one case a company was asked by the ASA why a certain sports game had not been released; the reason given was that the programmer had died.

A good reason but the only problem was that he was still alive. What is more, he had a hell of a time convincing software companies otherwise.

I have thought for some time that the only way to prevent this kind of nonsense would be to have a Computer Programmers' Union.

It would work only if the vast majority of programmers, designers, artists and musicians joined the CPU. If all the big names like Braybrook, Rob Hubbard, Tony Crowther, Bernie Drummond and Tag could be persuaded to become members the union might be able to gain influence with companies which were naughty.

If a software house pre-advertised a game the CPU could withdraw all its members from working for that company. If a firm charged too much for a game a programmer could ask the CPU to boycott the company. On the plus side for the companies there could be a realistic wages scale.

The union could also pursue the question of violence and sexism in games – the latter is starting to annoy me. In short, the CPU could be a substitute for the governing body which is badly needed in the software industry.

There are far too many sad stories of programmers being ripped off and, to a lesser extent, a software company being cheated by a programmer.

I am not a red-blooded socialist who demands power for the worker; in fact, the day I vote Labour will be the day full-price software becomes extinct.

I have been very lucky in that the vast majority of companies for which I have worked in the past have played – and paid – reasonably fair. Others have been less fortunate.

Many other leisure industries have a union, so surely now that the software market has come of age it is about time to have a CPU. It could benefit everyone if run properly. □

Neil Scrimgeour
(Sigma Software Designs)

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By divisible we mean exactly, without a remainder. Can you determine what our starting number must be?

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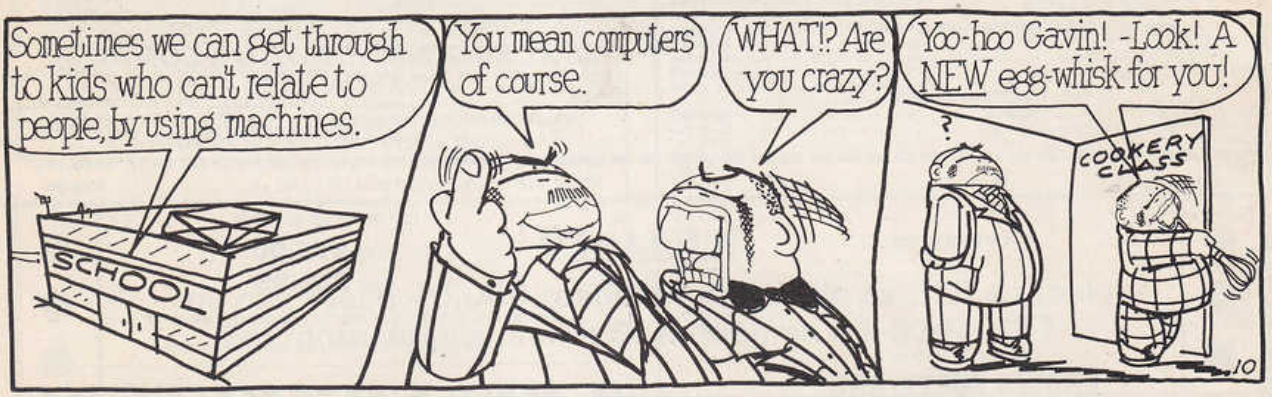

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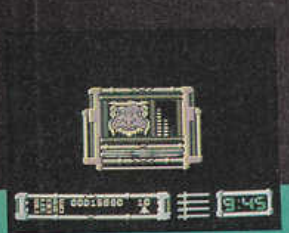

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